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Kevin McDermott and John Morison

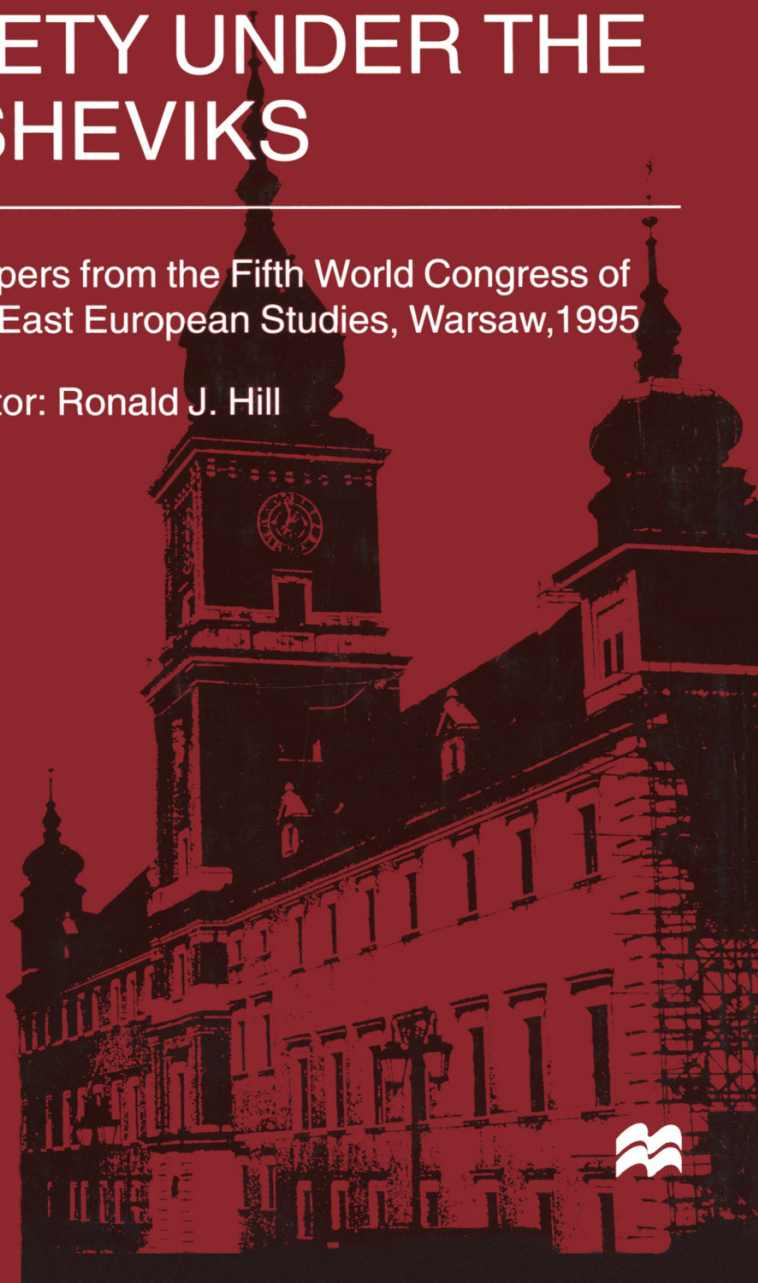
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# POLITICS AND SOCIETY UNDER THE BOLSHEVIKS

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Selected Papers from the Fifth World Congress of  
Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, 1995

General Editor: Ronald J. Hill



SELECTED PAPERS FROM THE FIFTH WORLD CONGRESS OF  
CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES, WARSAW, 1995

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# Politics and Society under the Bolsheviks

**Selected Papers from the Fifth World Congress of  
Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, 1995**

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# General Editor's Introduction

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce these volumes of papers that originated in the Fifth World Congress of Central and East European Studies, held in Warsaw in the week 6–11 August 1995, under the auspices of the International Council for Central and East European Studies and of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology and the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

In the period since the previous World Congress, held in Harrogate, England, in July 1990, that part of the world that is the focus of Slavists' special attention had undergone the completion of changes that were already in train but the outcome of which was still uncertain. Moreover, given the inevitable time-lag between the conception of a major scholarly event and its occurrence, the major concerns at the beginning of the decade were not yet those of charting and analysing the transition from communist rule to some other form of political, economic and social entity and the impact of this on the societies and cultures of Russia, the Soviet Union and the countries loosely referred to as 'Eastern Europe': far less ambitious expectations were still the order of the day. Even though Poland had led the way in abandoning communist rule, shortly followed by all the other countries in 'Eastern Europe', it took some considerable imagination and conviction for the Executive Committee of the International Council to take the bold decision to hold the 1995 Congress in Eastern Europe, a decision that evoked a very positive response from our colleagues in Warsaw.

The different international climate immediately made itself felt, as scholars from the region were able to attend in large numbers a conference organised by a body that had been almost exclusively 'Western' in its previous experience. No longer were they specially invited guests (who on previous occasions had sometimes been denied exit visas to attend such Congresses), and it was a moving experience for me, as

General Editor of the Congress proceedings, to receive letters and other communications by fax and e-mail from countries that in 1990 had no separate existence, or from provincial cities in the heart of post-Soviet Russia. Moreover, the opening of archives and the opportunities for new kinds of research, by scholars based in the countries concerned and by those entering from outside, meant that by 1995 there was much new information available, and scholars from the two 'sides' inevitably had much to say to one another.

The traditions in which the different groups had been trained meant that the styles of scholarship were not totally compatible, and there is a learning process in train that is likely to continue for some years. However, both the Congress itself and, more especially, the collaborative ventures such as this series of volumes containing selected papers, give opportunities for professional colleagues from around the world to make their own contributions to the new (and sometimes old) scholarly debates in ways that were hitherto impossible.

While not every paper that was presented or offered for publication was considered suitable for inclusion in the various thematic volumes, and individual editors sometimes had to make difficult choices and disappoint some authors, the endeavour as a whole must itself be seen as part of the global process of learning about the Slavic, Eurasian and Central and East European world: its peoples, its languages, its literature and cultural life, its history, politics, societies, economies, and its links with the rest of the world. Interest in the region is likely to grow, with new opportunities for contacts at various levels, and these volumes will, I am certain, serve both to educate and to inspire scholars and students anxious to understand.

It is very pleasant indeed to acknowledge once again the association of the Congress and the International Council with Macmillan, who will be publishing these volumes in the United Kingdom, and particularly the highly professional support and the keen personal interest of Tim Farniloe for the whole project. If I may add a personal note, I should like to express my gratitude to John Morison and the Executive Committee of the International Council for charging me with the function of General Editor; to the editors of individual volumes, to whom fell the difficult tasks of assessment and selection followed by the tedium of editorial preparation; to my wife, Ethna, for her assistance in keeping track of several hundred typescripts, letters, faxes and e-mail messages;

and to the many scholars who have patiently (and sometimes not so patiently – such are the pressures of modern academic life!) contributed to this complex international publishing venture. The collapse of communist rule has contributed sharply to globalisation, and the creation of this series of volumes has placed me at the hub of a world-wide enterprise, with editors on several continents and authors located in many countries of the world. It has provided me with a new kind of learning process for which I am humbly grateful.

*Trinity College, Dublin*

RONALD J. HILL

# Notes on the Contributors

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**Mary Buckley** is Reader in Politics at the University of Edinburgh. Her books include *Soviet Political Scientists Talking* (1996), *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (1989), and *Redefining Russian Society and Polity* (1993). She has also edited *Perestroika and Soviet Women* (1992) and *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia* (1997).

**Mary Schaeffer Conroy** is Professor of Russian History at the University of Colorado at Denver. She is author of *Peter Arkad'evich Stolypin: Practical Politics in Late Tsarist Russia* (1976) and *In Health and in Sickness: Pharmacy, Pharmacists and the Pharmaceutical Industry in Late Imperial, Early Soviet Russia* (1994), and is editor of *Emerging Democracy: Late Imperial Russia* (1998). She is currently writing a book on the Soviet pharmaceutical industry from the NEP to the Second World War.

**Irina Davidian** is a Research Fellow at the Institute of National Problems in Education, Moscow.

**Mikhail M. Gorinov** is a Research Fellow at the Moscow Union of Archives and is joint editor of *Moskva voennaia* (1995).

**Gabriele Gorzka** is Managing Director of the East-West Science Centre and Lecturer in East European History at Kassel University, Germany. She has published widely on Soviet cultural history: the Proletkul't, workers' clubs and Stalinist cultural policy.

**Peter Huber** lectures at the University of Basel. He has published many articles on the organisational structures of the Comintern and on the Swiss Communist Party. He is the author of *Stalins Schatten in die Schweiz* (1994) and is currently preparing a new international biographical dictionary of the Comintern.

**John Keep** was Lecturer, then Reader, at the University of London (1954–70) and Professor of Russian History at the University of Toronto (1970–88). His publications include *The Rise of Social Democracy in Russia* (1963), *The Russian Revolution: A Study in Mass Mobilization* (1976), *Soldiers of the Tsar* (1985), *Last of the Empires: A History of the Soviet Union, 1945–91* (1995), and *Power and the People: Essays on Russian History* (1995).

**Robert Maier** is a Research Fellow at the Brunswick Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Germany and is author of *Die Stachanov-Bewegung, 1935–38* (1990), which was awarded the Theodor Epstein Prize.

**Kevin McDermott** is Senior Lecturer in Political History at Sheffield Hallam University. He is author of *The Czech Red Unions, 1918–1929* (1988) and co-author of *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (1996). He is at present working on a study of Stalin.

**John Morison** is chairman of the School of History at the University of Leeds and past President of the International Council for Central and East European Studies. His recent publications have focused on the 1905 Revolution in Russia.

**Alexander Rabinowitch** is Professor of Russian History at Indiana University. His works include *Prelude to Revolution* (1968) and *The Bolsheviks Come to Power* (1976). He is completing a study of politics and society in Petrograd during the first year of Soviet rule. He has received Guggenheim and Fulbright-Hays fellowships and was the first Distinguished Visiting Scholar in Moscow for the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

**Donald J. Raleigh** is Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has written, translated and edited numerous books including *Revolution on the Volga: 1917 in Saratov* (1986). He is



completing a monograph based almost exclusively on recently opened provincial Russian government, Communist Party and secret police archives entitled *Experiencing Civil War: Politics, Society and Revolutionary Culture on the Volga, 1918–22*.

**Susan Z. Rupp** is Assistant Professor of Russian History at Wake Forest University. Her research focuses on opposition politics during the Civil War, particularly on the fate of moderate democratic forces in Russia. Her publications include 'Conflict and Crippled Compromise: Civil War Politics in the East and the Ufa State Conference', *Russian Review* (April 1997).

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**Aleksandr Vatlin** is Senior Lecturer in Modern History at Moscow State University and Vice-President of the Russian Association for Soviet Studies. He has published extensively on the Comintern and the European labour movement. He is the author of *Komintern: Pervye desiat' let* (1993) and co-editor of *Das erste Tribunal. Das Moskauer Parteiverfahren gegen Brandler, Thalheimer und Radek* (1993).

# Preface

Kevin McDermott edited the chapters by Rabinowitch, Raleigh, Rupp, Keep, Bayerlein and Huber, and edited and translated the chapter by Vatlin. John Morison edited and translated the chapters by Davidian, Tiazhel'nikova and Gorinov, and edited the chapters by Conroy, Buckley, Gorzka and Maier. John Morison chaired the international programme committee for the Fifth World Congress for Central and East European Studies and had specific responsibility for the Russian and Soviet history section from which the contributions in this volume have been selected. John Morison prepared the Index.

The editors have adopted the Library of Congress transliteration system with the exception of well-known names such as Trotsky (Trotskii) and Zinoviev (Zinov'ev).

# Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Comintern	Communist (Third) International
CYI	Communist Youth International
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
<i>guberniia</i>	province (administrative unit in pre-revolutionary Russia)
FSKRRF	Russian Federation Counter-espionage Service
GARF	State Archive of the Russian Federation
GASO	State Archive of the Saratov Region
GKO	State Committee of Defence
KPD	German Communist Party
MPVO	Local Anti-Air Force Defence
NEP	New Economic Policy
NKGB	People's Commissariat of State Security
NKVD	People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs
<i>oblast'</i>	province (administrative unit in Soviet period)
OGPU	Unified State Political Administration
OMS	Department of International Communication (of the Comintern)
PCF	French Communist Party
Profintern	Red International of Labour Unions
PVO	Anti-Air Force Defence
<i>raion</i>	district (administrative unit, subdivision of <i>oblast'</i> )
RCP	Russian Communist Party

RGAE	Russian State Archive of the Economy
RTsKhIDNI	Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History (former Central Party Archive)
SOTsDNI	Saratov Regional Centre of Modern Historical Documentation
SPD	German Social Democratic Party
TsA FSB RF	Central Archive of the Russian Federation Security Service
TsA FSK RF	Central Archive of the Russian Federation Counter-espionage Service
TsAODM	Central Archive of Social Movements of the City of Moscow
TsGAIPD SPb	Central State Archive of Historical and Political Documentation, St. Petersburg
TsGASA	Central State Archive of the Soviet Army
TsGA SPb	Central State Archive of the City of St. Petersburg
<i>uezd</i>	administrative district, subdivision of <i>guberniia</i>
VChK	All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combatting Counter-revolution and Sabotage (Cheka)
<i>volost'</i>	rural administrative district, subdivision of <i>uezd</i>
VTsSPS	All-Union Central Council of the Means of Communication
ZAGS	Civil Registry Offices

# 1 Politics and Society under the Bolsheviks

## An Introduction

Kevin McDermott and  
John Morison

When scholars met in Warsaw in August 1995 at the Fifth World Congress for Central and East European Studies, one of the main themes of discussion for the historians among them was the relationship and interaction between the Bolsheviks and society. Since the previous World Congress in Harrogate in 1990 increased right of access to Russian archives and to hitherto inaccessible materials had opened new opportunities for in-depth study of this general theme, and in particular of society's attitudes and responses to the Bolshevik regime. It is possible that future opening of the President's Archive and of all the files of the security police will reveal sensational details, which will be seized upon by the world's press, and materials which will facilitate a fundamental re-evaluation of the nature and operational methods of the commanding heights of the regime in the Kremlin. What is certain, however, is that the research being undertaken by the scholars whose revised contributions to the Congress are included in this volume, and by other historians working on related topics, will significantly change, modify and expand existing interpretations of relations among the party, the regime and society, and of popular attitudes towards the regime.

Mary Schaeffer Conroy's study of the Russian pharmaceutical industry in the late imperial and early Soviet period provides a revealing case study of industrial development across the revolutionary divide. Although considerable progress had been made by 1917, problems remained in producing certain crucial medicines. Government policy was a mixed blessing. Some regulations helped the industry, but others impeded it. Tariffs penalised the import of raw materials, but

favoured imported preparations. Nevertheless, by the eve of the First World War domestic industry was supplying a large proportion of Russia's medical needs and was using domestic research to make some important innovations on its own account. The war and then the revolution and its aftermath brought serious dislocation to this evolving system of production and supply. As existing trade links were broken, desperate efforts were made to find new routes and to develop Russian-produced substitutes for previously imported drugs, with significant success during the war period. The Bolshevik Revolution brought setbacks and an era of shortages. Professor Conroy demonstrates convincingly that responsibility for this lay with Bolshevik expropriations and bureaucratic interference rather than with the destruction wrought by the Civil War. The Soviet pharmaceutical industry revived tentatively and erratically under NEP, but was still dogged by over-regulation, over-centralisation and bureaucratic in-fighting, as well as by the natural obstacles which had impeded development under the tsarist regime. For the population, Bolshevik rule had brought fewer pharmacies and drug stores, considerable shortages and price rises. The situation was catastrophic in the countryside, with virtually no pharmacies and shops and a consequent absence of soaps and private medicines. Pharmaceutical workers suffered pay cuts and unemployment. In this vital area, Bolshevik victory had harmed rather than helped society.

If Professor Conroy points to the gap in performance between the tsarist and early Soviet regimes, the next two contributions elucidate the divide between expectations and reality in the period of social conflict following the October Revolution. The chapters by Alexander Rabinowitch and Donald J. Raleigh examine the complex relationship between the infant Bolshevik state and two of its 'natural' constituencies: Petrograd workers and the Revolutionary Communist Party in the Saratov region. Professor Rabinowitch focuses on worker discontent and subsequent resistance to the new government in the first half of 1918. Using previously inaccessible archival material, he charts the evolution of the Extraordinary Assembly of Delegates from Petrograd Factories (March–July 1918) in its attempts to wrest control of working-class institutions from an 'incompetent, unresponsive and arbitrary' Bolshevik administration. He provides new insights into the scale of opposition, while reaffirming the idea that soon after their seizure of

power the Bolsheviks resorted to openly repressive measures in an effort to curb worker disaffection. The Assembly initially sought to work within the Soviet system for a 'renewal of the revolution', but by mid-May Bolshevik intimidation and drastic food shortages had radicalised the leadership, which now began to discuss the need to overthrow the regime. Plans were laid to hold a one-day general strike and to coordinate actions with similar groups in Moscow and elsewhere, but in an atmosphere of intense repression the Assembly was banned on 27 June and its leaders arrested the following month. Rabinowitch concludes that the archival materials on the Assembly support the proposition that the crisis of spring and summer 1918 represented the most dire threat to Bolshevik rule in Petrograd during the entire Civil War.

Professor Raleigh's chapter provides a regional perspective on the early Soviet period by taking us away from the seat of power to the bread basket of the republic, Saratov province. Here, the Bolsheviks adopted somewhat different tactics in their desperate quest for survival. Raleigh draws on the Foucauldian theory that ruling elites attempt to constrain their subjects not only by suppressing them, but also by co-opting their strategies of dissent and by organising and channelling oppositional forces. He applies this notion to the case of the Revolutionary Communists (RCs) in Saratov. The RCs, who split from the Left Socialist Revolutionary Party in mid-1918, resolutely rejected an open struggle against the government, but insisted that in a peasant country a 'dictatorship of all toiling elements' (*vlast' trudiashchikhsia*) was essential for building socialism. Initially the Bolsheviks responded with 'merciless coercion', but in March 1919, threatened by Denikin's armies and village unrest, Lenin softened his stance towards the middle peasantry and the Saratov Bolsheviks decided to conciliate the RCs. They were legalised and permitted to enter local government, though still subject to harassment, particularly at rank-and-file level. This 'inherent tension' in the relationship between the Bolsheviks and RCs did not deflect the Revolutionary Communists from their commitment to Soviet power. Indeed, in Raleigh's opinion this proved the decisive factor in saving Saratov province from the Whites. Going a step further, he suggests that Lenin's justification for the pro-peasant New Economic Policy bore 'an uncanny resemblance' to the RC concept of *vlast' trudiashchikhsia*.

The shifting balance of contending political forces in Siberia during the early phase of the Civil War forms the theme of Susan Z. Rupp's contribution. Cutting through the fog of what was a massively complicated situation, Professor Rupp explains in some detail the demise of the liberal and socialist opposition to the Bolshevik regime. In particular, she sheds new light on the nature, vicissitudes and internal divisions of the anti-Bolshevik parties, demonstrating how personal and regional rivalries undermined their political cohesion and military capabilities. Neither could the democratic opposition rely on the active support of the popular classes – the workers were hostile, and the peasants largely indifferent, to the centrist Provisional Siberian Government established in mid-1918 in Omsk. The abolition of the soviets and the dilution of the provisions on the right to strike, the eight-hour working day and the minimum wage alienated the labour movement and fostered widespread strikes. The attitudes of the peasantry were determined mainly by self-interest and parochialism. Demands for more land and fewer taxes were accompanied by a deep scepticism of all political parties. Peasant resistance in 1918, however, should not be exaggerated. It was only in the spring of 1919 that the peasants began to organise effectively and consistently. Thus, in Rupp's opinion, the Siberian example is indicative of the general impotence of a 'fragmented centre', which 'rendered the Civil War a struggle between political extremes'.

The next two chapters move forward into the 1920s with a discussion of the progress made towards the formation of a Soviet political consciousness and a study of the stressful impact of this period of transition on party members themselves. Irina Davidian uses citizens' letters to the press, private correspondence and reports by party and security police organs to analyse the evolution of political consciousness in the 1920s. Initial apoliticism was challenged by a wide variety of official campaigns and measures. The Soviet authorities deliberately attempted to create and direct a 'new consciousness' as part of the process of constructing socialism. They met with some success. A combination of propaganda and punishment, or intimidation, helped to make the masses ready to believe the official line. However, strong elements of the traditional Russian mentality survived, particularly among the peasantry. This retarded and modified the official campaign, but at the same time the regime was able to harness at least some of the



traditional traits, such as naive monarchism, collectivism and egalitarianism, to its own purposes.

This process of transformation, and the problems associated with the adoption of the New Economic Policy, imposed immense strains on political activists. This was reflected, as Viktoriia Tiazhel'nikova graphically demonstrates, in high rates of suicide among members of the Communist Party, Komsomol and Red Army command. Memories of civil war atrocities, inability to cope with a huge variety of new demands, strain from overwork and the general social insecurity, to which the official propaganda campaigns contributed, took their toll.

Stalinism lies at the heart of the Soviet experience and the Stalin period is the focus of attention of the next section of the book. John Keep's valuable bibliographic survey of post-Soviet studies of the Stalin era poses the question: have Russian historians come to terms with the 'totalitarian legacy', or does their work reinforce Russian national consciousness and even neo-imperial aspirations? Professor Keep locates post-Soviet historiography in the context of a general 'wave of nostalgia for the recent past', which has generated an 'identity crisis' often remedied by nationalism, myths, symbols and a search for scapegoats. Basing his assessment mainly on journal articles published since 1991, he identifies three principal areas of recent research on the Stalin period: social and economic, which is relatively undeveloped; foreign policy; and politics. All have benefited from improved access to archival material. The key themes addressed by Russian scholars include the human impact of collectivisation and the famines of 1932–33 and 1946–47, the effects of the Great Terror on different social and ethnic groups, the Nazi–Soviet Pact (which 'serves as a litmus-paper to distinguish historians' attitudes'), the 'Great Patriotic War', and the origins of the Cold War. This recent historical writing, Keep argues, emphasises facts before theories. No new over-arching model of Stalinism – save a revamped totalitarianism – is on the horizon.

Gabriele Gorzka re-evaluates the relationship between Stalin's regime and the population in the 1930s in her examination of the attitudes of the industrial work-force of a provincial city, Iaroslavl'. Taking the textile factory, *Krasnyi perekop*, as her main indicator, she vividly depicts the problems created by the extravagant demands of the First Five-Year Plan with its introduction of a third shift in factories and the consequent enlargement of the work-force with unskilled

workers, mostly uprooted victims of the collectivisation drive. Their absenteeism, poor work discipline and frequent transfers from one job to another led to a tightening of disciplinary procedures and the introduction of financial incentives for increased skills and productivity, mainly through piece-work. The net result was that highly-skilled workers could earn three to four times as much as an unskilled colleague in the same branch. As price rises shot ahead of wages and collectivisation reduced the variety of food available and caused a deterioration in diet, a majority of mostly older workers became critical of the Five-Year Plans. In contrast, a minority of younger, active party workers gave enthusiastic support to the concept of an industrial revolution from above which would achieve socialism and an enhanced personal status for themselves. The latter willingly engaged in socialist competition and signed up for 'shock brigades' and as Stakhanovites. These enthusiasts were highly unpopular with 80-90 per cent of their colleagues who feared that such antics would for them lead to more work without increased material reward. Sabotage became widespread and shock workers frequently suffered physical intimidation.

An analysis of conditions at the *Krasnyi perekop* textile factory shows clearly the severe strains to which workers were subjected in the 1930s. Living conditions were appalling, demand for housing far outstripped supply and there were insufficient consumer goods to go round. Tensions within the work-force were exacerbated as priority in allocation of scarce flats and goods was given to the skilled activists. The workers were far from being intimidated in this stormy decade. At general meetings, vociferous criticism was voiced of poor management and working conditions; the managers countered with complaints against dirty, unmotivated and drunken workers. This polarisation of the factory served the regime's interests well. No united front was forged against the political and economic concepts of the command economy. Worker dissatisfaction was directed against local managers. Steam was let off at the seemingly interminable meetings, but little of substance was achieved.

The parallel cultural revolution encountered similar problems. Cultural activity and the literacy campaign were planned in detail from on high. A minority of enthusiasts participated fully. Those who could see personal advantage in professional-technical courses enrolled and studied. But the majority rejected politically-inspired cultural and

leisure activities in favour of purely recreational relaxation such as dancing. Young workers did not abandon their traditional pursuits of drinking, brawling and card-playing. The real worker, in Gabriele Gorzka's conclusion, became alienated from the 'new way of life'. A considerable gulf separated the regime from the broad masses.

Mary Buckley provides a complementary investigation of popular attitudes in the post-collectivisation countryside. Also using newly available archival material, she analyses the reality behind the façade of the extension of the Stakhanovite movement into the countryside. These rural shock workers met with personal disappointments as the rewards promised for their superhuman efforts all too often failed to materialise. They were also regularly the subject of abuse, sabotage and even assault by their fellow peasants. Envy and resentment at a personal level mingled with a lingering antipathy towards Soviet power and the collectivisation for which it had been responsible. Graphic case studies bring to life and substantiate this general thesis. Rural collectivism was offended by a system which demanded that an unfairly large share of scarce resources be given to rural Stakhanovites to help them fulfil their higher production targets. The attitudes analysed by Irina Davidian for the 1920s clearly survived into the 1930s. But it was not simply a case of a clash between the rural population and the values of the régime as represented by the Stakhanovites. Dr Buckley demonstrates that local officials tended to support the popular persecution which often silenced or even drove out the rural Stakhanovites. A unitary policy was therefore not being handed down efficiently from above. Moreover, the variety of responses to Stakhanovism shows how complex were the social processes of the time, far more so than in some of the traditional interpretations.

Many of Mary Buckley's rural Stakhanovites were women. Robert Maier provides an illuminating account of how activist women were enlisted into a parallel movement in the 1930s which proved to be more effective in defending workers' rights than the official, but by now powerless and inert, trade unions. Sergo Ordzhonikidze was instrumental in mobilising a grassroots movement which the leadership saw, like the Stakhanovites, as a useful tool in attaining its objective of the total mobilisation of society. Wives of engineers and technicians, for instance, could be enlisted in a cultural crusade to eliminate relics of the past, to improve social conditions at the work-place and to raise cultural

levels. However, this 'tremendous treasure' of untapped female energy proved to be less malleable and compliant than the rulers would have wished. Throwing themselves into this campaign with fervent enthusiasm, these women activists soon proved, in the eyes of the management, to be at least as much of a nuisance as a help. Workers' complaints were taken up with alacrity and demands for improved canteens, nursery facilities and the like were made on their behalf. This 'meddling' and threats to report them to the political authorities were deeply resented by local managers. In the end, the *obshchestvennitsy* were curbed and purged in 1937–38 and their independence of outlook suppressed. Their commitment to the socialist rhetoric of the regime had been too genuine for their own good, as ideal clashed with reality.

Thus, Robert Maier offers an important case study of a grassroots movement which was sponsored by the leadership, enjoyed temporary favour and patronage, but then was drained of spontaneity and made into an empty shell as its transient autonomy led it to transmit messages from the bottom upwards to a regime which essentially was concerned only with the promulgation and passage downwards of its own objectives and official vision. The cultural and social activists of the *obshchestvennitsa* movement were expected to be obedient servants rather than semi-independent initiators. The movement became an embarrassment when it pointed to the existence of a gulf between the perceptions and opinions of mass society and those of the state.

Mikhail Gorinov also uses newly-released archival material to take the story forward into the 1940s with his sensitive study of the shifting moods of Muscovites during the first year of the war against Nazi Germany. The mobilisation of young males and the evacuation of children, women and industrial workers to the east led to a sharp ageing and feminisation of the city's population and to the removal of most of the politically active elements. A major deterioration in the food supply situation from the autumn of 1941, a fuel crisis and destruction from air-raids, which was much more serious than previous official figures claimed, all had their impact. Stringent measures by the security police stifled any open dissent. This intimidation of the population was accompanied by an improving official propaganda campaign which helped to dissipate earlier scepticism and wild rumours generated largely by an informational 'famine'. But even more effective were

eye-witness accounts of Nazi barbarities which gave credence to the official line.

Dr Gorinov's extensive use of the archives has uncovered much evidence to undermine the orthodox Soviet interpretation of a patriotic upsurge in Moscow from the first days of the war. His research confirms the existence of considerable popular scepticism and dissatisfaction towards the regime which found early expression among some in a mood of defeatism. This mood then changed and ordinary people often displayed greater heroism than the lower and middle-ranking leaders who deserted the capital in droves in October 1941 in the face of the German advance. The ensuing hysteria was only checked by Stalin's speeches of 6 and 7 November and the parade on Red Square on 7 November. Thereafter, improvements in the military situation fostered growing confidence, only dented by the fears induced by the winter's food and fuel crises. Nevertheless, Dr Gorinov concludes that non-material factors, such as the supply of information, had a greater impact on mood and morale than purely material ones. In the end, the people chose the Bolshevik dictatorship, and suffered extreme deprivations, rather than a degraded national existence under Hitlerite rule, but not without substantial wavering on the way.

The final section of the book moves to an examination of the Soviet regime's relations with societies beyond its borders, with four chapters devoted to the activities of the Communist International (Comintern). The essays by Aleksandr Vatlin, Bernhard H. Bayerlein, Peter Huber and Kevin McDermott address contrasting issues in its history. Dr Vatlin's concise, innovative piece analyses the Comintern experience from the angle of its external reception in inter-war Europe rather than from a narrowly internal or 'Russified' focus. In so doing, he aims to relocate the Comintern's heritage in the mainstream of twentieth-century ideological and political history. He posits a new three-stage periodisation of Comintern history based on changing European perceptions of the organisation and its mission of world revolution: 1919-23 - years when the Comintern appeared as a radical 'military-political movement' and as such was 'enemy number one' among bourgeois ruling elites; 1923-33 - a decade of stabilisation in which the truly international dimension of the Comintern succumbed to the concept of 'world Bolshevism'; and 1933-43 - a period in which communist parties underwent a process of 'internalisation' and the

Comintern itself was viewed as a mere appendage of Soviet foreign policy. Although the Comintern no longer posed an imminent threat to democratic principles, neither could it join forces with the democrats against the burgeoning fascist danger. Dr Vatlin concludes that the ideology of international communism was torn between two 'magnetic poles': the spiritual bond with the European socialist movement and the organisational bond with the Bolshevik party. 'The latter was more material and hence more durable.'

Bernhard H. Bayerlein adopts a broadly sympathetic stance to the abortive 'German October' of 1923. Basing his arguments on recently accessible archival materials in Moscow, he maintains that the actions of the German Communist Party (KPD) and the Comintern should no longer be characterised as an 'extremist *putsch*' in that an objective revolutionary situation obtained in the crisis-ridden Weimar Republic. To this extent, the plans of the Russian Politburo for the German revolution were not utopian. At the same time, the new evidence establishes beyond all doubt that the Bolshevik leaders, primarily Grigori Zinoviev, and the Soviet secret police decisively intervened in the political, military and technical preparations for the uprising, furnishing vast amounts of cash through the Soviet embassy in Berlin. However, Dr Bayerlein qualifies the notion of 'Bolshevik control' by identifying a 'powerful motivational push' from the German party, which 'chose for itself the policies proposed' by the Russians. Most interestingly, the new documents suggest that during these fateful months no monolithic bloc existed within the Politburo, the Comintern or the KPD. Indeed, fierce debates engulfed these ostensibly despotic organisations. For Bayerlein, then, the 'totalitarian paradigm' has little explanatory power, although he recognises that factional manipulation epitomised the sordid post-mortem after the débâcle of October–November 1923. Scapegoats were required, and Zinoviev and Stalin insisted on the punishment of the 'Trotskyists', in particular Karl Radek and the German 'Rightists'. The abortive revolution and its aftermath thus marked the 'definitive dependence of German communism on the Russian party–state structures' and more broadly the onset of the Stalinisation process in the Comintern.

Peter Huber's chapter addresses the important, but under-researched, theme of the structure and functions of the Comintern's central administrative bodies. He outlines the reorganisations of the

apparatus that occurred periodically in the 1920s and 1930s and painstakingly constructs the composition of the leading personnel in the Comintern hierarchies. Dr Huber forces us to reassess the position of Russian operatives in the International. It seems that Russian functionaries in the various departments of the Executive Committee of the Comintern did not enjoy numerical dominance, although there can be no doubt that Bolsheviks increasingly held top positions in the key organs. Huber's work also demands a reconsideration of the impact of upper and middle-ranking departmental cadres in the apparatus. Extrapolating from his research, a series of intriguing questions springs to mind: to what extent did the delegation of work by the Comintern leadership to departmental officials foster a sort of power shift in which effective decision implementation rested with behind-the-scenes bureaucrats? Indeed, did these officials influence the decision-making processes in their role as 'gate-keepers' of vast amounts of information? Or does the orthodox view that Stalin, via his lieutenants Manuil'sky and Dimitrov, maintained an iron grip over Comintern policy formation still hold true?

The final essay in the volume, by Kevin McDermott, explores the applicability of the concept of totalitarianism to the activities of the Comintern, particularly in its Stalinist phase. He adopts what could be termed a 'centrist' position, challenging both the influential 'orthodox' interpretation, which identifies the Stalinisation of the Comintern as the logical outcome of its totalitarian essence, and the anti-totalitarian 'revisionist' argument, which emphasises the highly diverse nature of the international communist movement and the relative autonomy of national communist parties. Adapting Simon Tormey's differentiation between 'strong' and 'weak' totalitarianism, he suggests that the latter model is sufficiently flexible to include the Bolshevik urge to 'total' control and conformity, while allowing room for disagreement, negotiation and even covert opposition in the Stalinised International. The crucial distinction is between the strictly centralised form of decision *making* and the devolved nature of decision *implementation*. Although the Comintern executive organs in Moscow increasingly determined the decision-making process, they could not completely foreclose all space for initiative and autonomous activity from below on the part of the national communist parties.

The contributors adopt a predominantly empirical and document-

based approach to their research. By so doing, they significantly extend our knowledge and deepen our understanding of the complexities of the social processes at work in Soviet Russia. They point to local and regional variations and to a diversity of attitude and behaviour not just within specific groups of the population, but also among servants of the regime. They expose continuities in traditional attitudes and the patchiness of the influence of official propaganda on the people as the gap between rhetoric and reality remained wide. They challenge many received conceptions and interpretations of popular responses towards the regime as well as of the nature of the regime itself. Their work is part of a broadly-based scholarly effort in many countries which is already succeeding in transforming our understanding of the Soviet period. It is on the basis of work such as this that grand new interpretations and theories may emerge, for better or for worse. Perhaps a definitive answer may even be attempted to Mikhail Gorinov's question of whether or not a peculiarly Russian national character existed. Whatever the case, the evidence presented in this volume shows that the regime's aspiration to form a 'new Soviet person' was founded on extremely shaky foundations.



## 2 The Russian Pharmaceutical Industry in the Late Imperial–Early Soviet Period

Mary Schaeffer Conroy

Comparing the pharmaceutical industry and pharmacy sector of early Soviet Russia, through the NEP, with that of late imperial Russia highlights the differences in public health care and living standards for average urban and rural consumers before and after 1917. In addition, the pharmaceutical industry and pharmacy sector of early Soviet Russia illuminate government operations and economic issues during the Civil War and NEP periods.

The Russian pharmaceutical industry developed rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century as a result of converging factors: increased governmental and public concern for hygiene and public health; continued pharmacological research in university and pharmacy laboratories; the establishment of *zemstvos*, whose mandate to protect public health was more broadly based than that of the provincial Boards of Welfare dating from the eighteenth-century; and above all innovative pharmacists who combined scientific investigation into new medicines and new sources and methods of producing traditional remedies with the business of quality control, packaging, marketing, distribution and advertising.

The Russian pharmaceutical industry was representative of industry as a whole in the late imperial period. In the early twentieth century there were almost a hundred pharmaceutical enterprises scattered in the

European section of the Empire. Seven were located in Warsaw, seven in the Baltic region, three in Kremenchug (Ukraine), seven in Tver', two in Kazan', two in Kostroma province, three in Nizhnii-Novgorod and two in Khar'kov. One or more enterprises were located in Olonets, Dvinsk, the Caucasus, Kiev, Saratov, Minsk, Grodno, Kishinev and Vil'na. Some twelve enterprises were located in St. Petersburg. Moscow was the hub of the pharmaceutical industry with some twenty enterprises. Owners included individuals, *zemstvos*, medical societies, family associations or partnerships, and publicly-held joint-stock companies. Medical societies and *zemstvos* in Poltava, Chernigov, Khar'kov, Kherson, Odessa and Samara began to produce smallpox and anti-rabies vaccines and tuberculin in the 1880s.<sup>1</sup> In 1896 the government established a factory in St. Petersburg to produce medicines for the military. This factory and the Military Medical Academy in St. Petersburg produced over sixty kinds of tablets and other pharmaceuticals.<sup>2</sup>

Many of these late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century pharmaceutical enterprises in Russia were small workshops. However, some, including Pel' and Sons in St. Petersburg and R.R. Keler and V.K. Ferrein in Moscow, were large operations, employing hundreds of workers and using sophisticated technology. Pel' patented spermine among other medicaments and packaged it in ampoules which he invented. The Ferrein firm employed chemists and had laboratories for testing and quality control. It ought to be noted that the firm treated its workers well: as early as 1881, Ferrein established a profit-sharing plan for the workers in his pharmacies, drug stores, laboratory and warehouse. In 1910 safety measures protected Ferrein's factory and laboratory workers and they enjoyed other amenities. Ferrein, Pel' and Keler used modern marketing techniques, selling medicines, bandages, soaps, cosmetics and cleaning powders to the hinterlands through wholesale warehouses, agents, and illustrated catalogues or *preis-kuranty*. Keler, Ferrein and Pel' produced their own packages and containers. Russian firms competed with one another and with foreign pharmaceutical firms operating or selling medicines and supplies in Russia, such as Merck, Shering, and Parke, Davis and Company. Experts judged the quality of some goods produced by Russian firms to be equal to that of foreign houses. However, when goods by foreign firms were preferred, large Russian firms lured customers by offering

favourable prices, credit and delivery terms. In contrast to extravagant claims made by purveyors of American patent or proprietary medicines, Russian firms' advertising was sober and to the point.<sup>3</sup>

Since Russia was integrated into the world economy and imported a number of raw materials, Russian pharmaceutical firms' costs, prices and profits were linked to international market prices. In 1910, to realise an economy of scale a number of Russian pharmaceutical producers and wholesalers formed a stock company for imports, exports and internal trade. The association's headquarters were located in Moscow, with branches in Paris, London, Berlin and four key Russian cities. The Keler Company did not join; however, Pel' and Sons' 'Spermine' was one of the association's main products.<sup>4</sup>

While plants remained the basis for many important medicines, Russian pharmacopoeias reflected the increased use of prepared, synthesised medicines in Western medical practice. Only about 120 items, or 25 per cent, of the first Russian pharmacopoeia of 1778 were prepared; by 1866 the Russian pharmacopoeia included 427 prepared items or 46 per cent of the total, and by the 1890s prepared, mineral-based medicines amounted to 80 per cent of all items listed in the Russian pharmacopoeia.<sup>5</sup>

The Russian pharmaceutical industry was hampered in producing some crucial medicines and thus in competing with foreign pharmaceutical firms on the world market and within Russia itself. Some obstacles impeding the industry were beyond its control, some were the fault of the pharmacy corporation, and some were due to flawed government policies.

One of the factors retarding the Russian pharmaceutical industry was lack of sources, both plant and chemical. Lack of plant materials, in turn, stemmed partially from failure to cultivate them or from misguided government policies, and also from foreign (especially German) strangleholds on patents, but mainly from climatic and other natural factors.<sup>6</sup>

The cinchona tree and coca plant, sources for quinine and cocaine respectively, did not grow in Russia at all. Some other important plants were also not indigenous to Russia. For example, V.K. Ferrein struggled for a long time to cultivate *Hydrastis canadensis*, important as a hemostatic, on his plantation near Moscow; he finally achieved success through applying special fertilisers.<sup>7</sup>

In other cases, plants indigenous to the Empire, and needed for crucial medicines, had inadequate alkaloid contents. Iodine was imported because the best sources for this substance were located off the coast of Chile and controlled by a syndicate. Attempts were made to derive iodine from seaweed in Pacific waters,<sup>8</sup> and in 1909 from salt brine and oil in the Apsheron peninsula in Azerbaijan; production was negligible, however.<sup>9</sup> Opium was imported because the morphine content in opium grown in the Caucasus was far below that required by the national pharmacopoeia. The Russian government banned the growing of opium poppies in Russian Turkestan (Central Asia) after the conquest of this area in the 1860s and 1870s because of fears of addiction, and confiscated opium illegally produced. However, the confiscated opium was found to have little medicinal value.<sup>10</sup> In any case, even if Russian opium had contained proper alkaloid content, the German firm Bayer had a patent on the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century wonder drug, heroin.<sup>11</sup>

Russian firms were hindered in producing medicines made from coal-tar both by Bayer's monopoly on patents for coal-tar-based medicines, such as antipyrine, antifebrin, phenacetin and aspirin<sup>12</sup> and also by minimal production of coal-tar by-products, such as benzol and toluol, in Russia. (It ought to be noted that neither the United States nor England produced sufficient amounts of these items before the First World War.<sup>13</sup>) Nevertheless, a Russian scientist named Ginzberg had synthesised phenacetin in 1886, and phenol was produced in Odessa before the First World War.<sup>14</sup> In addition, although pure benzol and toluol were imported, two or three Russian factories produced raw benzol before the war.<sup>15</sup>

Some government regulations were helpful towards the pharmaceutical industry or at least were justifiable on public health grounds. The government was initially a driving engine for the chemical and soap industries. Regulations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the advertising and sale of over-the-counter medicines protected consumers from dubious nostrums such as those quaffed by Americans in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Contradictory laws issued during the nineteenth century by the Ministries of Internal Affairs and of Finance on the sale of prepared medicines in pharmaceutical emporia or drug stores (*aptekarские магазины* – as distinct from pharmacies or *apteki*) may have worked initially to the advantage of both retail

establishments and the industry. The Medical Council of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was concerned that prepared medicines should be sold *exactly as received*; the Ministry of Finance, on the other hand, concentrated on drug stores *stocking and purveying medicaments and sundries separately*.<sup>16</sup>

However, ultimately, these regulations and stringent rules on pharmaceutical factory start-ups and production throttled the industry. Similarly, early twentieth-century tariffs which favoured imported preparations and penalised imports of raw materials, lacking in Russia and needed by Russian pharmaceutical manufacturers, hurt the industry.<sup>17</sup>

In 1911, the Minister of Internal Affairs, P.A. Stolypin, tried to boost the Russian pharmaceutical industry without relinquishing government control by encouraging domestic firms to produce generic versions of foreign preparations. Names of Russian medicines could be similar to those of foreign products but their labels were to indicate domestic provenance. Foreign, and particularly French, firms were outraged, but the measure had little practical effect since unfair tariffs and the tangle of government regulations cramping Russian firms remained.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, conservative pharmacists, who feared that the factory would replace the pharmacy, and Russian physicians' and their patients' preference for foreign wares thwarted the domestic pharmaceutical industry.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, on the eve of the First World War, the Russian pharmaceutical industry supplied a good portion of the Empire's medical needs. At that time Russians used seven million roubles' worth of domestically-produced medicines against three million roubles' worth of imported pharmaceutical products. Put another way, Russians used 39 domestically produced crucial medicines and disinfectants against 48 imported items, although some of the domestic medicines and products may have been produced by foreign firms operating in Russia.<sup>20</sup> Some *zemstvos* relied partly or exclusively on domestically produced medicines.<sup>21</sup>

The reason for this was that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century locally prepared antitoxins, noted above, and remedies derived from domestic plants or commonly available chemicals addressed many health needs and diseases plaguing citizens of the Russian Empire. *Solodkovyi koren'*, or licorice root, was used to treat constipation, as an ingredient in a product to treat bronchial asthma, and as a powder

to improve the taste and smell of pills. An alkaloid of the fungus *Sporyn'ia* served obstetrical practice.<sup>22</sup> Round worms and tape worms were very widespread in all parts of the Empire;<sup>23</sup> hence, the vermifuge *Santonin*, a compound produced in Russian Turkestan from artemesias flowers, was extremely important. Indeed, Russia successfully exported the three above-mentioned substances along with *Likopodii* or club moss.<sup>24</sup> Ferrein produced benzoin preparations.<sup>25</sup> Black mustard treated digestive ailments and dropsy. Various roots addressed 'catarrh' of the respiratory organs. Aleksandriiskie leaves, found throughout Russia, countered intestinal problems. Buckthorn attacked fever and parasites. *Adonis vernalis* provided a source for digitalis, a therapy for heart ailments.<sup>26</sup>

Febrifuges were important because malaria was Russia's main communicable disease in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century<sup>27</sup> and other fevers were as common as they were elsewhere. Russia imported quinine, antipyrine, antifebrin, phenacetin and aspirin. However, the basic formulae for antipyrine, antifebrin and phenacetin were published in Russian pharmacology texts.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, there seemed to be no shortage of antifebrin, for in the late 1880s it was recommended that this substance be used in place of the more expensive quinine to counter malaria.<sup>29</sup> In some cases, Russian medicines were substituted for foreign medicines such as 'pistsillia' for morphine and 'dubonzin' for atropine.<sup>30</sup>

Russian medical and pharmacological researchers kept pace with new medical developments, and the Russian pharmaceutical industry even made contributions to Western therapeutics. Merck's 1897 report on the Western pharmaceutical industry praised Russians for pioneering the use of native plants, such as *Extractum periplocae graecae* from the Black Sea region to treat heart disease, and products such as *Iodterpin*, a powder for dusting wounds, and *Naftalan*, a by-product of oil extraction, for burns.<sup>31</sup> German, Italian and French research on new remedies for venereal and skin diseases and injections of glandular material (in which Russians participated)<sup>32</sup> dominated Merck's 1899 report. However, Merck also reviewed Russian research on a plant-based remedy to remove dimness of the cornea and on new chemical remedies targeting children's intestinal diseases, bronchitis and shortness of breath, and a substance to increase appetite in leukemia and anaemia patients.<sup>33</sup> Merck touted Pel's new 'Physiological Salts': this chemical

compound attacked colds and urinary tract and heart problems, and quickly raised blood pressure when necessary. The product had undergone many clinical tests and was sold in various forms – as tablets which could be dissolved in water to bathe mucous membranes, as an atomiser in the nose, or for subcutaneous injections.<sup>34</sup>

Between 1909 and 1911 Russian production of salicylic acid increased markedly, although it dipped between 1911 and 1912.<sup>35</sup> Russian salicylic acid was inferior to the febrifuges produced in Germany but gave promise for the future. Similarly, a laboratory established in 1914 in the Russian Stock Company of the Chemical Industry, named 'Russian Dye', formed the basis for producing a Russian version of the new anti-venereal Salvarsan.<sup>36</sup> On the eve of the First World War, Russian firms produced a sufficiency of hygroscopic gauze 'of the best quality', unrefined or non-narcotic chloroform, ether, cotton, bandages, and other medicinal items.<sup>37</sup> Russian-made Vaseline oil was sufficient for domestic use before the First World War.<sup>38</sup> Russia ranked fourth in world production of mercury, a common therapeutic for syphilis, as well as other diseases, although during the war the supply was insufficient.<sup>39</sup> Domestically-produced soaps and disinfectants combated many serious communicable diseases. During the war, *Naftalizol* and *naftenovoe* soap, made by Nobel brothers in Baku, was effective in curbing typhus.<sup>40</sup>

In any case, when domestic production did not suffice, goods were imported. As a result, before the First World War, Russian consumers were offered a wide range of medicines, pharmaceutical products and household items. The pre-war catalogue for Oskar Getling's Moscow Warehouse advertised a myriad of medicines, foods, toilet paper, soaps and cleaners, including two pages devoted to Pel's products.<sup>41</sup> The June 1914 Keler and Company catalogue advertised sulphuric ether, twenty kinds of drops, including valerian and mint drops, cough syrups, quinine, salicylic preparations, Vaseline, menthol, boric acids, various oils – mercury, zinc, sulphur, arsenic, cod liver and fish oils, disinfectants, anaesthetics, toothpaste and other materials for dental hygiene, all manner of soaps for humans and animals, food supplements, dyes, toilet paper, cosmetics, and photographic equipment. The Keler Company produced many of these items.<sup>42</sup>

Of course, domestic production, supplemented by imports, was not sufficient to supply medicines adequately to the Empire's citizenry. An

effective network of pharmacies and other retail establishments was required. Although pharmacies were limited in number by law, in the decade before the First World War city-dwellers in all parts of the Empire were quite well served by over 4,800 pharmacies, some 8,000 to 9,000 drug stores or *aptekarские магазины*, which sold over-the-counter medicines (and proliferated because they were less regulated than pharmacies), hospital and clinic pharmacies, and small first-aid kits.<sup>43</sup> The Russian government set prices (periodically revised) for medicines dispensed by pharmacies. The average cost of a prescription in the early twentieth century hovered about 40–50 kopeks, but many provisions were made to supply the poor with medicines at reduced cost.<sup>44</sup>

Rural dwellers were less well served than city-dwellers. Privately owned rural (*sel'skie*) pharmacies grew at a faster rate than fully-outfitted (*normal'nye*) pharmacies and even predominated in some areas such as the Baltic States. Nevertheless, because of the poor infrastructure and the pharmacists' lack of enthusiasm for living in the countryside, there were fewer village pharmacies per capita than city pharmacies. Furthermore, village pharmacies were often not fully stocked or managed by fully qualified pharmacists.<sup>45</sup> The Keler firm produced, packaged and sold oils and drops to peasants for self-treatment,<sup>46</sup> but rural dwellers sometimes resorted to home remedies or self-appointed healers (*babki* and *znakhari*).<sup>47</sup>

Publicly owned pharmacies were but a fraction of all pharmacies in late imperial Russia. However, a strong socialist movement promoted them from the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century through the First World War. From the 1880s, supporters of *zemstvo* pharmacy advocated dispensing medicine at reduced rates or free to all *zemstvo* taxpayers. Between 1904 and 1914 left-wing pharmacists urged that private pharmacies be *municipalised* – that is bought out and turned over to *zemstvos* and municipalities.<sup>48</sup> Despite signs that *zemstvo* pharmacy was often costly and inefficient,<sup>49</sup> between 1907 and 1911 a coterie of Kadet and Octobrist Duma members worked to expand *zemstvo* and municipal pharmacies, finally passing a bill giving *zemstvos* and cities an advantage over private entrepreneurs in establishing pharmacies. The government was equivocal both about the unrestricted establishment of pharmacies and drug stores and about public versus private pharmacy. From the late 1890s, several ministers



of internal affairs advocated strengthening public pharmacy in the new pharmacy statute being drafted, but to a lesser extent than that desired by socialists and liberal Duma members. Late in 1911 the State Council, the upper chamber of parliament, passed the bill allowing *zemstvos* and cities to establish pharmacies without prior governmental approval (*iavochnym poriadkom*). Signed by the tsar, on 12 February 1912, the new law hurt some private pharmacy owners but did little to improve dispensing for rural dwellers in Russia and the Ukraine, not to mention the Caucasus, Central Asia and Siberia.<sup>50</sup>

Marxist pharmacists supported the growth of the pharmaceutical industry because it was more scientific than compounding in the pharmacy. However, they organised strikes during the revolution of 1904–5 and through the First World War tried to radicalise pharmacists employed in pharmaceutical factories as well as in pharmacies and drug stores, although the latter were mainly apathetic to their message.<sup>51</sup>

The First World War affected the Russian pharmaceutical industry in several ways. Trade links for imported prepared medicines and raw pharmaceutical materials were broken. Factories in the Baltic states and other areas near the front were moved to the interior, disrupting operations. Poland, an important locus of the pharmaceutical industry, had come under German control by 1915.<sup>52</sup>

Circuitous trade routes were used, new trade links were established, principally with Japan, and most importantly the Empire strove for import-substitution. Many sectors of the population – pharmacy owners and pharmaceutical factory owners, *zemstvos*, cities and the *Zemstvo* Union, university scientists, scientific societies, the government, religious organisations and the general populace – engaged in frenzied attempts to collect and cultivate medicinal plants, exploit and refine new mineral sources, and break patents in order to produce domestically crucial medicines and supplies that until then had been imported. The government supplied funds for many of these projects and, very importantly, by 1916 loosened the reins on approving products.<sup>53</sup>

Soviet pharmaceutical officials praised efforts to obtain iodine in plants built in 1916 near Arkhangel'sk on the shores of the White Sea and at Beiuk Shor, a salt lake near Baku, and efforts to develop iodine production in the Black Sea region and on a lake in Omsk, Western Siberia.<sup>54</sup> They continued to use the White Sea and Beiuk Shor factories in the 1920s. Soviet officials also praised attempts to develop

opium-growing in Central Asia in 1916.<sup>55</sup> They further lauded the Ferrein factory's production of carbolic acid from Donetsk phenol in 1915-16, replacing that made in the Warsaw gas factory which was in German hands by 1915, and likewise praised and used the thirteen salicylic factories erected before or during the war.<sup>56</sup>

Some wartime efforts at import substitution were marred by duplication, waste and failure. However, wartime efforts also resulted in new enterprises; new medicines, especially anti-venereal preparations which included Arsol, a substitute for Salvarsan; the production of coal-tar products necessary for modern coal-tar-based preparations; and increased production of salicylic acid, a small amount of iodine, opiates, cough syrups and medical supplies. By the end of 1916 some medicines were plentiful and prices dropped accordingly.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, in 1916 the Russian pharmaceutical industry was healthier than before the war. But private enterprise was not. Local officials who won elections to city dumas and many academic pharmacists and scientists, who were influential in organising wartime pharmaceutical production, joined socialist pharmacists in excoriating private entrepreneurs and advocating a pharmaceutical industry organised and subsidised by the government and managed by public agencies.<sup>58</sup>

During the revolutionary year of 1917 socialist pharmacist labour organisers harassed and weakened owners of private pharmacies and, to some extent, pharmaceutical factories.<sup>59</sup> After the Bolshevik take-over in October, 1917, socialist pharmacists began 'municipalising' private pharmacies. This now meant seizing them without compensation, and transferring them to municipal dumas.<sup>60</sup>

Municipalisation was soon curbed by the Bolshevik authorities. Despite the fact that municipalisation often followed elaborate procedures, the Bolshevik government labelled it 'chaotic'. Multiple pharmacy organisations were organised at the central level – a pharmacy department in the new Commissariat of Health, Farmatsentr in the Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh) and for a time a pharmacy department in the Commissariat of Internal Affairs – as well as departments (*otdely*) at provincial and district levels. The individuals who ran these organisations included radical socialists, some of whom were erstwhile Mensheviks, reformers who had not appeared radical before and during the war, and at least one individual related to the former pharmaceutical establishment, F.G./A. Ferrein. Some of the

new pharmacy officials were pharmacists, others were not. During the course of 1918 and 1919, these Bolshevik pharmacy authorities sequestered pharmacies, pharmaceutical factories and warehouses from their owners – private individuals, corporations, *zemstvos* – and put them under the management of the governmental agencies. The Bolshevik government regulated dispensing and pharmacy training, as had the tsarist and provisional governments before it. However, the Bolshevik government now *owned* pharmacies, drug stores, laboratories, and pharmaceutical factories and thus its regulations were far more comprehensive and intrusive. Government pharmacy agencies managed pharmaceutical production. In the name of rationalisation the government tried to centralise wholesale pharmaceutical trading, funding for the operation and maintenance of pharmacies and other enterprises, and salaries.<sup>61</sup>

Subsequently, the problems that Soviet pharmacy and the pharmaceutical industry faced during the Civil War and in the 1920s – shortages of medicine, pharmacists and pharmacies, plus the fact that the Soviet pharmaceutical industry lagged behind the West, wiping out gains achieved during the World War – were attributed to the destruction that occurred during the Civil War. To some extent this explanation was true. For example, peasants in Poltava province cut back on the production of mint during the World War and the Civil War, impeding the production of mint oil.<sup>62</sup> Exports of *Sporyn'ia*, *Likopodii*, *Solodkovyi koren'* and some other medicinal plants plummeted during the Civil War,<sup>63</sup> although this does not prove that they were not available for home consumption. Channelling supplies and pharmacists to the Red Army meant shortages for civilians.

However, many problems besetting pharmacy and the pharmaceutical industry at the end of the Civil War and throughout the 1920s were traceable not to the war *per se* but to specific government policies, as telegrams and reports from the provinces, reports of government meetings and articles in the pharmaceutical press amply testified. Expropriation of pharmacies, laboratories and plants was disruptive and led to loss of pharmacists. Some stayed on to run nationalised enterprises and government agencies. However, others fled the country when their property was confiscated. Some pharmacists were roughed up or killed. Pharmacists who remained were forced to work long hours for meagre pay. Pharmacy education and training deteriorated as

student pharmacists, chemists and parapharmacists or *praktikanty* were pressed to dispense. On the other hand, pharmacy agencies and administrators proliferated. Their time and energy were devoted to organisational meetings and paperwork rather than to the business of pharmacy and the production of medicine. Overlapping jurisdiction was inefficient and resulted in turf wars. Shortages of medicines, soap and pharmaceutical equipment for the populace were due partly to requisitioning for the Red Army but also to the government's insistence on centralising supply, distribution and funding. Pharmacists who attempted to get supplies outside the government network were severely punished. Meanwhile, narcotics were plentiful on the street. The number of pharmacies and drug stores shrank, partly because of a dearth of supplies, money and qualified pharmacists, but also because new pharmacy officials arbitrarily closed many retail establishments.<sup>64</sup>

The New Economic Policy (NEP) was inaugurated in March 1921. Some pharmacies were leased to private groups. However, other pharmacies, pharmaceutical factories and warehouses, imports and *aptekarские магазины* (drug stores) remained under government control. In 1923–24 two main central government agencies ran pharmaceutical enterprises and imported pharmaceutical wares. Pharmaceutical factories, wholesale warehouses and some drug stores were under the jurisdiction of Farmatrest, the pharmacy trust in the VSNKh. Importing and exporting, some warehouses and some pharmacies and drug stores were under the jurisdiction of Gosmedtorg in the Commissariat of Health.<sup>65</sup> In April 1924 these two government bodies were merged to form the joint-stock company Gosmedtorgprom.<sup>66</sup> Provincial organisations known as *gubmedtorgi* ran pharmaceutical factories in Leningrad, the Ukraine and Georgia.<sup>67</sup>

The Soviet authorities never ceased to believe that proper administration and organisation could solve most problems. However, during the NEP as during the Civil War, multiple pharmaceutical agencies engaged in turf wars. Between 1924 and 1927 the Commissariat of Health and VSNKh were ranged against the Commissariat of Trade on issues of production and import, resulting, according to one Soviet pharmacy official, in 'superfluous expenses, harmful competition, and impediments to growth of the pharmaceutical industry'.<sup>68</sup> In 1923 ten trading companies were consolidated into 'Khimfarmtorg', the state chemical and pharmaceutical trading company. However, by 1926

Khimfarmtorg was at odds with the Commissariat of Foreign Trade and was being harassed by Rabkrin – the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate – one of Stalin's former fiefdoms. Rabkrin attacked Khimfarmtorg for channelling medicines into private hands, among other criticisms, barred Khimfarmtorg from a national congress, and planned to liquidate the organisation. The board of directors fought back, publishing a brochure to present their side of the issue.<sup>69</sup>

In the early NEP (1923–24), productivity in the Soviet pharmaceutical industry was further hampered because of workers' summer vacations.<sup>70</sup> In addition, mint was still in short supply between 1921 and 1923 because peasants in Poltava province switched to cultivating more lucrative *makhorka* tobacco.<sup>71</sup>

For these and some other reasons, the Soviet pharmaceutical industry revived tentatively and erratically during the NEP. Furthermore, while imports of medicines and consumer goods coupled with the domestic production of new medicines, some in sufficient quantities, and the production of cosmetics, toilet articles and cleaning supplies all benefited urban consumers, medicines and soaps were woefully lacking in rural areas, where most of the population lived.

In November 1923 the catalogue of the former Keler factory, renamed Semashko, again listed medicines, soap, dish-washing powder, 'Metamorphoz' cold cream, perfume, face powder, toothpaste and powder, shampoo, 'Komfort' toilet paper, Russian Vaseline, egg dye and fruit essence, but the number and variety of the items in the catalogue were less than half of those in the 1914 list.<sup>72</sup> In 1924, L. Gartsshtein exulted over renewed or increased production of many items such as antifebrin, mercury, fitin, Digalen, heroin, Dionin, pantopon, novosalvarsan, nitric acid, barium for x-rays, amygdalin, tannin, ovarin, salol, aspirin, narcotic chloroform, terpinhydrate, sulphuric ether and codeine. However, many of these items depended upon raw materials from abroad and were produced in very small quantities, forcing Gartsshtein to admit that Soviet output of these items served only about 60 per cent of the Union's needs.<sup>73</sup> In 1926 a Ukrainian pharmacy journal glumly conceded that the Soviet pharmacy and the pharmaceutical industry were behind the West and were not moving forward as they should.<sup>74</sup> In late 1927, a Soviet pharmacy official, A. Aluf, a former Menshevik Internationalist who only reluctantly supported Bolshevik centralisation and nationalisation

instead of municipalisation and workers' control in 1918,<sup>75</sup> lamented that 'despite the fact that chemical and pharmaceutical production are in the hands of the government, for the most part centralised and working according to a fixed plan, and notwithstanding that treatment centres are under the jurisdiction of the department of health, nevertheless rational [prepared, dosed] medicines are distributed to an insignificant degree in Russia'.<sup>76</sup>

The achievements which the Russian pharmaceutical industry realised during the NEP can be credited in part to energetic Soviet pharmacists, managers of pharmaceutical enterprises, and pharmacy officials. But pharmaceutical production during the 1920s also owed a lot to pre-revolutionary bases. Factories, warehouses and marketing networks established by Russians, foreigners and *zemstvos* before and during the First World War formed the basis of the Soviet pharmaceutical industry. In addition, much production during the 1920s was based on research and production begun on the eve of or during the First World War. Farmatrest customarily listed pharmaceutical concerns under the names of their former owners. For example, in Moscow, factories number 1 and 2 were alkaloid and salicylic factories dating from the war or later; on the other hand factories number 4, 8, 12, and 13 had belonged to Shering, Ferrein, Keler, and Allen and Gamburis. The Wholesale Warehouse used by the Trust and subsequently by Gosmedtorgprom had been Ferrein's.<sup>77</sup> Keler's drug-stores in Moscow and outlets in Vladivostok, Khar'kov, Arkhangel'sk, Tashkent, Rostov-on-the Don and Western Siberia enabled Farmatrest and then Gosmedtorgprom to sell the Semashko factory wares throughout the Soviet Union.<sup>78</sup> *Zemstvo* warehouses and the wholesale warehouse of the *Zemstvo* Union were major acquisitions for the Commissariat of Health.<sup>79</sup> The iodine factory located at Beiuk Shor near Baku and that on the White Sea near Arkhangel'sk, both built in 1916, formed the basis of Soviet iodine production.<sup>80</sup> The 1914 laboratory in the Russian joint-stock company 'Russian Dye' formed the core of the Soviet aniline trust and produced Soviet salvarsan.<sup>81</sup>

Meanwhile, the failures which the Soviet pharmaceutical industry faced at the end of the NEP were due partly to faulty government policies but additionally to the same natural and insurmountable conditions which had stymied the Russian pharmaceutical industry during the tsarist period.

Salicylic preparations and Soviet salvarsan, Novoroslan, analogous to Neosalvarsan, and Zil'beriovarsolan, analogous to Neosilbersalvarsan, were the chief success stories of the Soviet pharmaceutical industry.<sup>82</sup> In the autumn of 1924, F.(A.) Ferrein estimated that 70 per cent of the Soviet Union's needs for salicylic acid were being covered by domestic production.<sup>83</sup> By 1928 Ferrein asserted that Soviet production of pure benzol and toluol guaranteed the Union's needs.<sup>84</sup> The government regulated prices for pharmaceutical items. It set significantly lower prices for salicylic preparations, novosalvarsan, papaverine, pantopon in 1927 thanks to improved and increased production of these items.<sup>85</sup> By 1924 the Soviet pharmacy industry produced two heart preparations – Gitalen and Dirinorm – as substitutes for imported Digalen and Digirpuratum.<sup>86</sup> By June 1927 the Soviet pharmaceutical industry was producing a number of tablets previously imported, such as Atofan and Bromural, and prices were lowered accordingly.<sup>87</sup> In 1928 Russian Vaseline was deemed not inferior to American.<sup>88</sup>

But the Soviet pharmaceutical industry also had to admit many failures. In 1924, F. Ferrein listed some fifteen products for which there was little or no hope of domestic production, including cocaine, quinine and strychnine.<sup>89</sup> Despite repeated attempts to produce iodine from ashes of White Sea seaweed, production remained minimal throughout the 1920s and for the same reason which had plagued the industry in the imperial period: inadequate sources with inadequate alkaloid content.<sup>90</sup> The factory utilising brine at the Beiuk Shor Lake near Baku was more productive,<sup>91</sup> but iodine was still largely imported at the end of the 1920s.<sup>92</sup> Quinine, atropine, bromide and some other alkaloids were entirely imported.<sup>93</sup> In 1923, the pre-revolutionary 'Ars' factory, nationalised and renamed Moscow State Factory No. 14, was leased and under the name 'Ars' advertised production of morphine, Dionin and heroin.<sup>94</sup> However, as in the imperial period, the morphine content of Central Asian opium fluctuated, ranging from 4.5 to 18 per cent, with an average at 7 to 14.5 per cent, making Soviet opium adequate for domestic needs but not competitive on the world market.<sup>95</sup> (Indeed inadequate supplies of raw materials or inadequate alkaloid content continued to plague the Soviet pharmaceutical industry in the ensuing decade, necessitating the importation of most cocaine, morphine and iodide preparations in 1934 as before.)<sup>96</sup>

During 1926 and 1927, the first nitrogen factory in Russia was constructed and the construction of a superphosphate plant was planned.<sup>97</sup> But hydrophosphates were still imported at the end of 1928;<sup>98</sup> many prepared medicines were still imported;<sup>99</sup> a Soviet-made chocolate powder for children imitating Nestlé's was frankly admitted to be inferior and less nutritious.<sup>100</sup> In 1924 there was limited production of benzoic acid and adrenalin, but the quality of the Soviet product was not equal to American preparations. Lanolin had not been made for some time because of a deficit of good quality skin oil.<sup>101</sup>

During the NEP, the Soviet pharmaceutical industry still mainly relied on medicinal herbs; Russia's chief exports were the same as before the war.<sup>102</sup> Yet in 1924 a pharmacy official criticised the lack of attention to the cultivation of important medicinal plants in Russia and averred that it was high time proposals on this matter dating from 1915–16 were heeded! He specifically cited the need to cultivate Valerian root.<sup>103</sup> In 1927, Valerian root was still in short supply, as were bilberries, sage, camomile and some other important plants.<sup>104</sup> In the same year, inter-departmental conflicts retarded the cultivation and gathering of crucial medicinal plants.<sup>105</sup> Similarly, fish-oil production was down in 1927 because the Fishing Trust plan cut production.<sup>106</sup>

Wholesale terms of sale were not as advantageous during the NEP as in the pre-revolutionary period. Although the Semashko-Keler factory promised to send out wares within 14 days, credit was not extended, half the payment was expected in *chervonets* roubles, and customers were expected to provide their own containers.<sup>107</sup> In 1923, Semashko-Keler offered discounts for large orders.<sup>108</sup> By 1927 Gosmedtorgprom was economising: prices reflected the cost of production, they were firm, and there were no longer discounts for large orders.<sup>109</sup>

Even so, judging from Khimfarmtorg's obsession with proving its profitability in 1926, it was evident that concentrating production and trade in a few government agencies rather than distributing it among multiple organisations, most run by private entrepreneurs, had not yielded the intended economy of scale. Over-consolidation was cumbersome, constant reorganisation disruptive. Political rivalry between government agencies had a negative impact on their balance sheets and the national budget. Costs and pricing were affected by the industry's need for imports that were sometimes expensive and by fluctuating world prices.<sup>110</sup>



In 1924–25, prescriptions cost, on average, 41 per cent more than before the First World War. But wholesale costs had risen, on average, by 87 per cent compared with the pre-war period. Nevertheless, in 1927 the Council of Labour and Defence (STO, in its Russian acronym) ordered pharmacies and drug stores to dispense at lower prices, and in some areas prices were lowered by 10–12 per cent, causing pharmacy officials to fear that *apteki* would not realise enough profit to pay salaries.<sup>111</sup>

As in the imperial period, increased domestic production, supplemented by imports of medicines and materials which Russia could not produce, was not enough to ensure an adequate supply of medicines, toiletries, cleaning powders and the like to the populace. For consumers to benefit, an adequate network of pharmacies and drug stores was needed. Between 1922 and 1925, some pharmacies still operating were leased to private groups;<sup>112</sup> during 1924, a competition for the best pharmacy was held.<sup>113</sup>

However, in 1924–25 there were 39 per cent fewer pharmacies in the RSFSR than existed before the revolution.<sup>114</sup> In Kostroma province, for example, 34 or 35 pharmacies – *zemstvo*, factory, military, and private – operated before 1917; eleven operated in the city of Kostroma, three of them privately owned. In 1924 only seven pharmacies operated under the provincial medical association; the city of Kostroma had only three.<sup>115</sup> And in 1925 local government pharmacy organisations began placing leased pharmacies back under their control.<sup>116</sup>

The pharmacy situation was abysmal in the countryside throughout the NEP, mainly owing to calculated government policies. Officials closed nearly all rural pharmacies in 1919 and 1920. At the beginning of the NEP, when the government permitted the reopening of pharmacies by private groups or individuals, the countryside was bereft of trained medical personnel and medical supplies. It was claimed that the populace turned to self-healers as they had done to some extent in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>117</sup>

The pharmaceutical situation in the countryside did not improve as the NEP progressed largely because of the Commissariat of Public Health's prohibition on over-the-counter sales in small private shops and markets of prepared medicines (*fasovki*) which could be taken without a doctor's prescription.<sup>118</sup> There were still virtually no pharmacies

and drug stores in the countryside in 1927. Peasants were unable to purchase soap and basic medicines. Co-operatives and individuals bombarded Gosmedtorgprom with requests for these items.<sup>119</sup>

In addition, during 1927 both peasants and urban dwellers were hurt by Gosmedtorgprom's cost-cutting measures – scaling back production and price rises on basic items such as medicinal herbs and green soap, the latter because of increased costs of ingredients.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, the tariff formulated by the Commissariat of Foreign Trade in the summer of 1927 imposed very high duties on imported dosed medicines, cosmetics and medical instruments. The ostensible purpose was to help the Soviet pharmaceutical industry and bring in money to the treasury; however, high duties were bound to hurt consumers and doubly so if domestic production could not be substituted for imports.<sup>121</sup>

By January 1930, with collectivisation in full swing, pharmaceutical problems were acute in some rural areas. A certain 'N. Sh.' informed the *Khimiko-farmatsevticheskii zhurnal* that necessary wares such as soap and tooth powder were utterly lacking in the villages. One rural pharmacy served ten villages in a radius of 30–40 kilometres. Meanwhile, trachoma and scabies were rampant.<sup>122</sup>

Practising pharmacists, in contrast to pharmacists who became government officials, did not fare well during the NEP. Pharmacists or workers in pharmaceutical factories enjoyed summer vacations.<sup>123</sup> But night duty, a measure protested against by radical pharmacists for decades before the revolution, was still a feature of the pharmacy worker's life in 1924.<sup>124</sup> The use of unpaid apprentices and unpaid *praktikanty* or parapharmacists – two other bugbears of pre-revolutionary socialist pharmacists – still existed in 1927. The former practice continued mainly because student pharmacists had no better way of learning the profession; the use of *praktikanty* continued partly because of a shortage of pharmacists and partly because a Government Circular of 1925 required anyone away from pharmacy practice for five years to train in a pharmacy for six months and anyone away for more than five years to train for one year.<sup>125</sup> Payment did not greatly improve during the NEP in any case. In Kiev where pharmacies were nationalised in 1919,<sup>126</sup> the average pay of an unqualified pharmacy worker in 1924 was 70 per cent of pre-war pay.<sup>127</sup> By 1927, in order to economise, pharmacies cut staff and forced pharmacists still employed to work longer hours.<sup>128</sup>

Thus, the professionalism that pharmacists had worked so hard to achieve in the pre-revolutionary period had been eroded. The outlook was brighter for future pharmacists because of strenuous efforts to improve education and training. In 1924 the government instituted a higher pharmacy institute in Moscow. An outgrowth of the 1915 proposals by the tsarist Minister of Education, Ignatiev, the Institute provided a four-year course of study – three trimesters and one semester for diploma work. Over 800 individuals were enrolled in 1924,<sup>129</sup> signalling that, despite problems, the profession of pharmacy was as attractive as it had been before the revolution. A higher pharmacy institute was also established in Leningrad following the October Revolution.<sup>130</sup>

In sum, the picture for the pharmaceutical industry *per se* was mixed at the end of the NEP in 1928. Russia was self-sufficient in some medicines, and the prognosis was good with regard to others, but hopeless with regard to other vital medicines, because of natural causes, which could never be rectified. Some prepared medicines and crucial raw materials were still imported and would probably continue to be in the foreseeable future. Thus, restrictions on imports in the 1927 tariff might lead to some scarcities. Urban consumers stood to benefit from development of new medicines and increased production in the Soviet Union. However, there were fewer pharmacies to serve them. Rural consumers were in unequivocally dreadful straits. Practising pharmacists were facing the same problems – in some cases worse problems than they had faced before the revolution. Concentration of pharmaceutical production and trade into a few government agencies, rather than distributing it among many organisations largely run by private entrepreneurs, had not yielded visible financial gains. Indeed, the combination of inter-departmental squabbling, over-concentration and frequent reorganisation of agencies managing the pharmaceutical industry and pharmacies drained financial resources. The structural economic problems that Russia was to face from the 1930s through to the 1990s were apparent in embryonic form in 1926 and 1927.

Thus, the revolution had been implemented. The means of production had been removed from private capitalists. But where were the noticeable improvements? Who had really benefited? In whose name had the revolution been made?

## Notes

1. Mary Schaeffer Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness: Pharmacy, Pharmacists and the Pharmaceutical Industry in Late Imperial, Early Soviet Russia* (Boulder, CO, 1994), pp. 142–3 and 144–7.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 145, and *Istoriia farmatsevticheskogo dela v Peterburge–Petrograde–Leningrade* (Leningrad, 1960), p. 160.
3. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 142, 147–52, 153–9.
4. 'Khronika: Nizhegorodskaiia iarmarka', *Farmatsevticheskii zhurnal* [hereafter cited *F. Zh.*], Vol. 49, No. 31 (1910), pp. 345–6.
5. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, p. 147.
6. For detailed discussion of climatic impediments see *ibid.*, pp. 162–5.
7. N. Voroshilov, 'Hydrastis canadensis L. Kanadskii zheltokoren', *zolotaia pechat'*, *Khimiko-farmatsevticheskii zhurnal* [hereafter cited as *Kh-f. Zh.*], 1924, No. 2 (5), pp. 10–11. For Russian research on this plant in 1886 see V.O. Podvysotskii, *Farmakologiia veshchestv organicheskoi khimii, rastitel'nykh i zhivotnykh ... Dybkovskago s pribavleniiami po sodержanomu sostoiianiiu farmakologii do 1888 goda* (Kiev, 1889), p. 351.
8. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, p. 165.
9. O.Iu. Magidson, 'Novyi put' dobychi ioda v SSSR', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (38) (1927), p. 3.
10. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 164.
11. Charles C. Mann and Mark L. Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars* (New York, 1991), p. 26.
12. Bayer developed and marketed antipyrine, antifebrin and phenacetin in the 1880s, aspirin in 1899: *ibid.*, pp. 18–25, 26–8.
13. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 166–7.
14. M.G. Ena, 'Khimiko-farmatsevticheskaiia promyshlennost'', in O. Avilov et al (eds), *Razvitie khimicheskoi tekhnologii na Ukraine* (Kiev, 1976), pp. 260–61. For information on phenol and aspirin, see Mann and Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars*, pp. 40–41.
15. F.A. Ferrein, 'Uspekhi v snabzhenii khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti syr'em i polufabrikantami', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 6, No. 22 (70) (1928), p. 6.
16. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 24, 57–61.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 165–6, 168–71.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 308–12.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 172–3.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
21. For details see *ibid.*, pp. 156–9.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 159–60.
23. Podvysotskii, *Farmakologiia*, pp. 169–76.
24. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 159–60.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
26. Podvysotskii, *Farmakologiia*, pp. 184–5, 187, 190–91, 210–11, 346–8.
27. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, p. 141. For more details see Mary Schaeffer Conroy, 'Malaria in Late Tsarist Russia', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*,

- Vol. 56 (1982), pp. 41–55.
28. Podvysotskii, *Farmakologiya*, p. 348.
29. F.A. Ioganson, *Dobavlenie k repetitorium po farmakologii* (Kiev, 1889), pp. 164–5. Antifebrin cost only 15 roubles per funt.
30. Podvysotskii, *Farmakologiya*, p. 348.
31. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, p. 159.
32. Ibid.
33. E. Merck, *Khimicheskaya fabrika i apteka E. Merk v Darmshtadte (Germaniya): Otchet za 1899 god* (St. Petersburg, 1900), pp. 23, 79–80, 145–6, 151–2, 159, 162.
34. Ibid., pp. 151–2.
35. F. Ferrein, 'Tamozhennye tarify i ikh znachenie dlia khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, No. 7, p. 10. In 1924 Ferrein, a wartime critic of imperial tariffs, still attributed fall in production to poorly-designed tariffs.
36. V.A. Izmail'skii, 'O stovarsole i sal'varsanovykh preparatakh', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, No. 2 (5), p. 14.
37. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 160–61.
38. Ferrein, 'Uspekhi v snabzhenii khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti syr'em i polufabrikantami', p. 6.
39. For details see Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, p. 160; V. Sadikov, 'Voina i sostoianie Russkoi promyshlennosti', *F. Zh.*, Vol. 54, No. 35 (1915), p. 341.
40. Ferrein, 'Uspekhi v snabzhenii', p. 6.
41. *Optovyi Preis-kurant za nalichnyi raschet sklada aptekarskikh tovarov Oskar Getling v Moskve* (n.d.); contents and analysis in Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 148–9.
42. The *Optovyi preis-kurant tovarov firmennoi zadelki Moskovskago tsentral'nago optovogo sklada Fabrichno-torgovago Tovarishchestva 'R. Keler i Ko v Moskve'* (Moscow, July 1914) also includes graphic advertisements.
43. For details on pharmacies, drug stores and public semi-socialised pharmacies see Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 39–76.
44. See especially *ibid.*, pp. 52–4.
45. For details see *ibid.*, pp. 54–6.
46. L. Pisenman, 'K voprosu o zadachakh russkoi khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, No. 1 (4), p. 3.
47. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 45, 56, 67.
48. For details see *ibid.*, pp. 67–70, 258–9, 270–72, 280–82, 289–93.
49. Ibid., pp. 70–76.
50. Ibid., pp. 68–9, 296–308. See also unpublished chapter by Mary Schaeffer Conroy, 'P.A. Stolypin and the Pharmacy Corporation, Private Pharmacy, Zemstvo Pharmacy and the Pharmaceutical Industry in Late Imperial, Early Soviet Russia'.
51. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 259–93.
52. Ibid., pp. 321–4.
53. Ibid., pp. 324–39.
54. O.Iu. Magidson, 'Novyi put' dobychi ioda v SSSR', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (38) (1927), pp. 2–4, and B.N. Saltykov, 'Nauchno-tekhnicheskii sovet khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (98) (1930), p. 14.
55. G. Milovanov, 'Turkestanskii opii', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, No. 2 (5), p. 12.

56. Ferrein, 'Uspekhi v snabzhenii khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti syr'em i polufabrikantami', p. 6.
57. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 340–48.
58. Ibid., pp. 349–75.
59. Ibid., pp. 379–91.
60. Ibid., pp. 394–9.
61. Ibid., pp. 399–407, 422–8. The initial of F.G./A. Ferrein's patronymic was cited variously: in the minutes of the government interdepartmental committee that discussed pharmaceutical production in 1915. The 1912 Moscow telephone directory (Vsia Moskva) listed a Fridrikh Genrikhovich Ferrein. Genrikh Avgustovich, a cousin of Vladimir Karlovich Ferrein, died in 1907 and one would assume that Fridrikh Genrikhovich was his son. However, after 1917 and through the 1920s, the Ferrein active in the Soviet pharmacy organisation was cited as F.A. Ferrein. Like F. G./A. in 1915, however, the F.A. Ferrein of the 1920s was an expert on the impact of tariffs on pharmaceutical production.
62. M. El'kinson, 'Razvedenie miaty i dobyvanie miatnogo masla na Poltavshchine', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 9 (45) (1927), p. 26.
63. V.D. Abramov, 'Eksport leksyr'ia', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 3–4 (5–6), pp. 2–3.
64. For fuller details on these issues see Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 399–442; also Mary Schaeffer Conroy, 'Abuse of Drugs other than Alcohol and Tobacco in the Soviet Union', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (1990), pp. 447–80.
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67. Leningrad Gubmedtorg advertisement on unnumbered page in *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 3–4 (6–7); Gartsshtein, 'Ob organizatsii', p. 10.
68. Gartsshtein, 'Ob organizatsii', p. 10.
69. Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti ... 'Khimfarmtorg' (Moscow, 1926), pp. i, 7, 16–18.
70. Gartsshtein, 'Proizvodstvennaia rabota Gosmedtorgproma', p. 12.
71. El'kinson, 'Razvedenie miati', p. 26.
72. V.S.N.Kh. *Farmatrest Khimiko-farmatsevticheskii zavod imeni N.A. Semashko, byvsh. fabr. Torg. T-vo 'R. Keler i Ko v Moskve': Optovyi preis-kurant* (November, 1923).
73. Gartsshtein, 'Proizvodstvennaia rabota Gosmedtorgproma', pp. 12–13.
74. 'Nashi zadachi', *Khimiko-farmatsevticheskii vestnik*, 1926, Nos 1 and 2, p. 1.
75. Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, pp. 386, 408.
76. A. Aluf, 'Ratsionalizatsiia lekarstvennykh form', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (38) (1927), p. 2.
77. Advertisements, three unnumbered pages, *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 1 and 2. Photograph of Ferrein warehouse, drug store and advertisement for new preparations of Gosmedtorgprom, *Vestnik farmatsii*, 1924, Nos 8–9, p. 158.
78. Semashko-Keler Preis-kurant, November 1923, last two pages.

79. I. F. Rachkovskii, 'Besedy ob organizatsii i upravlenii aptekarskimi skladami', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Nos 3-4 (6-7) (1924), pp. 4-5.
80. A co-operative got production going again in 1923: S. I. Tilles, 'K istorii belomorskogo ioda', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 7 (43) (1927), p. 11.
81. Izmail'skii, 'O stovarsole', p. 14.
82. Ibid., pp. 14-16.
83. F. Ferrein, 'Perspektivy farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti', *Vestnik farmatsii*, 1924, Nos 8-9, pp. 134-5.
84. Ferrein, 'Uspekhi v snabzhenii', p. 6.
85. 'V Gosmedtorgprom', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (37) (1927), p. 30.
86. F. Ferrein, 'Tamozhnye tarify i ikh znachenie dlia khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Nos 10-12 (13-15) (1924), p. 9.
87. 'V Gosmedtorgprom', p. 30.
88. Ferrein, 'Uspekhi v snabzhenii', p. 6.
89. Ferrein, 'Perspektivy farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti', pp. 134-6.
90. In 1927 Tilles admitted that iodine derived from the ashes of White Sea seaweed served only a fraction of the Soviet Union's needs and maintaining the factory was hardly worth the money expended on it: Tilles, 'K istorii belomorskogo ioda', pp. 11-12.
91. Gartsshtein, 'Proizvodstvennaia rabota Gosmedtorgprom'a', p. 13; O.Iu. Magidson, 'Novyi put' dobychi ioda v SSSR', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (38) (1927), pp. 3-6.
92. Ferrein, 'Uspekhi v snabzhenii khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti syr'em i polufabrikantami', p. 5.
93. Ia. Kanevskii, 'Opasnoe v vlechenie', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (38) (1927), pp. 7-8; Saltykov, 'Nauchno-tehnicheskii sovet khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (98) (1930), p. 14.
94. *Vserossiiskii farmatsevticheskii vestnik*, 1923, Nos 4-5, p. 32.
95. Milovanov, 'Turkestanskii opii', pp. 13-14.
96. E.A. Tsofin, 'Vazhneishie zadachi khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti vo vtoroi piatiletke', *Sovetskaia farmatsiia*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (1934), pp. 41, 42, 43.
97. 'Novye khimicheskie zavody', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (37) (1927), p. 32.
98. Ferrein, 'Uspekhi v snabzhenii', p. 5.
99. Advertisements, *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1928, passim.
100. 'O detskoi muke tipa nestle', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 10-12 (13-15), p. 20.
101. Ferrein, 'Perspektivy farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti', p. 135.
102. Mir'iash, 'Predvaritel'nye itogi vystupleniia SSSR na mezhdunarodnoi iarmarko-vystavke v Leipsige', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 7 (43) (1927), pp. 7-10.
103. N. Voroshilov, 'Nuzhny-li nam spetsialisty po lekarstvennym rasteniiam?' *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, No. 2 (5), pp. 6-8.
104. 'V Gosmedtorgprom', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (37) (1927), pp. 30-31. Indeed, digitalis, valerian and belladonna were still in short supply in 1934. Furthermore, cultivation of the hemostatic *Hydrastis Canadensis* on the former estate of V.K. Ferrein near Moscow (which had since been transformed into an experimental sovkhos, was more fitful than in his time: N.N. Voroshilov, 'Opytnyi sovkhos "Bitsa" kak baza dlia snabzheniia lekarstvennym syr'em moskovskoi oblasti',

- Sovetskaia farmatsiia*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (1934), pp. 45, 48.
105. B.N. Saltykov, 'O mezhdovedomstvennom organe, reguliruiushchem "lekarstvennyi promysel"', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (39) (1927), p. 11.
  106. 'V Gosmedtorgprom'e', p. 30.
  107. 'Usloviia prodazhi', Semashko-Keler, *Optovyi Preis-kurant*, November 1923, first page.
  108. Ibid.
  109. Gartsshtein, 'Torgovaia politika Gosmedtorgproma', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (39) (1927), p. 10.
  110. *Kratkii ocherk ... 'Khimfarmtorg'*, pp. 1–19.
  111. S. Rachkovskii, 'Snizhenie tsen', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 7 (43) (1927), pp. 12–13.
  112. S. Rachkovskii, 'Deiatel'nost' Moskovskogo aptekopravleniia za 1923 i 1924/5 gg., i perspektivy na 1926/7 g.', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (37) (1927), p. 25.
  113. 'K konkursu na luchshie apteki, ob'iavlennomu Redaktsiia 'Khimiko-farmatsevticheskogo Zhurnala', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 3–4 (6–7), p. 2, and advertisement, *ibid.*, No. 7, p. 3.
  114. Rachkovskii, 'Snizhenie tsen', p. 13.
  115. K-ch, 'Aptechnoe delo v Kostromskoi guberniia', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, No. 2 (5), p. 20.
  116. Rachkovskii, 'Deiatel'nost' Moskovskogo aptekopravleniia', p. 25.
  117. Zil'berg, 'K vsesoiuznomu s"ezdu sektsii aptechnykh rabotnikov', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 8–9 (11–12), p. 2.
  118. L. Pisenman, 'K voprosu o zadakh russkoi khimiko-farmatsevticheskoi promyshlennosti', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, No. 1 (4), pp. 3, 4.
  119. Gartsshtein, 'Torgovaia politika Gosmedtorgproma', p. 9.
  120. 'V Gosmedtorgprom'e', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (37) (1927), p. 30, and Gartsshtein, 'Torgovaia', p. 10.
  121. I. Bychkov, 'Oblozhenie poshlinami importnykh medtovarov', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 7 (43) (1927), pp. 10–11.
  122. N. Sh., 'Bol'she vnimaniia derevne', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (98) (1930), p. 21.
  123. Gartsshtein, 'Proizvodstvennaia rabota Gosmedtorgprom'a', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 10–12 (13–15) p. 12.
  124. Ne-upravliaiushchii, 'O nochnykh i prazdnichnykh dezhurstvakh v aptekakh', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 3–4 (6–7), p. 24.
  125. Iu. Kuperman, 'Bor'ba s besplatnym trudom v aptekakh', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (39) (1927), p. 12.
  126. E. Khaskin, 'Aptechnoe delo v Kieve', Nos 3–4 (6–7), p. 23.
  127. Khaskin, 'Aptechnoe delo v Kieve', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 5–6, p. 28.
  128. Iu. Kuperman, 'Rezhim ekonomii i kachestvo aptechnoi produktsii', *Kh-f. Zh.*, Vol. 5, No. 7 (43) (1927), pp. 13–14.
  129. I Fel'dman, 'Khimiko-Farmatsevticheskii fakul'tet 2-go Moskov. Gosud. Un-ta', *Kh-f. Zh.*, 1924, Nos 3–4 (6–7), pp. 8–12.
  130. Alexander Semenovitch Ginzberg was instrumental in founding the Leningrad Institute: see Conroy, *In Health and In Sickness*, p. 601, n. 64.



# 3 Early Disenchantment with Bolshevik Rule

## New Data from the Archives of the Extraordinary Assembly of Delegates from Petrograd Factories

Alexander Rabinowitch

Support for the political platform of the Bolsheviks among Petrograd factory workers facilitated the party's seizure of power in October 1917, and helped it to overcome the threat posed by a hostile Constituent Assembly in January 1918. However, even at the time of the dispersion of the Constituent Assembly, several factors that were soon to erode the standing of the Bolsheviks among Petrograd workers had begun to emerge. These factors included the frustration of hopes of an immediate compromise peace, the shutdown of factories engaged in military production (resulting in massive unemployment),<sup>1</sup> chaotic evacuation policies, and most important, ever more dire food shortages. These developments, in turn, led in short order to worker protests, which then precipitated violent repressions against hostile workers. Such treatment further intensified the disenchantment of significant segments of Petrograd labour with Bolshevik-dominated Soviet rule. For the Soviet authorities in Petrograd, the rise of the Extraordinary Assembly of Delegates from Petrograd Factories and Plants was an ominous portent of worker defection.

The Extraordinary Assembly was a loosely organised labour protest movement that emerged among dissatisfied Petrograd factory workers in March 1918.<sup>2</sup> The movement, which originated in the heavily industrialised Nevskii district, made modest strides towards organising

on a national scale, and convening a national workers' congress, before being suppressed by the Bolsheviks in July 1918. In the Soviet era, historians in Russia were obliged to dismiss the movement as a Menshevik and SR 'front', in no way indicative of worker sentiment generally. Western historians, following the lead of a perceptive memoir by Grigorii Aronson,<sup>3</sup> have interpreted the Assembly movement as a valid reflection of widespread worker discontent with early Soviet domestic and foreign policies.<sup>4</sup> However, relatively little is known about the Assembly and its broader historical implications, largely because until recently most relevant primary documents were hidden away in classified Soviet archives.

I came across the Assembly's voluminous files at the St. Petersburg Central State Archive (TsGA SPb) in 1992, when they were being declassified. I was then seeking data for a broad study of politics and society in Petrograd during the first year of Soviet rule. Thus for my purposes the files turned out to be an unusually promising find. Included in them are stenographic accounts of all 19 Assembly plenary sessions (numbered consecutively), cryptic but none the less revealing protocols of many meetings of the Assembly's leadership bureau, lists of Assembly delegates by factory (accompanied by raw and tabulated data on their political affiliations and numbers of workers participating in their election), delegate registration questionnaires, copies of most leaflets and other publications produced by the Assembly, data gathered in investigations of such vital concern to labour as hunger, unemployment, the evacuation of industry, the operation of the Petrograd Soviet, the emasculation of trade unions, and specific cases of terror directed at workers, documents connected with the Assembly's effort to expand locally and nationally and to organise a national workers' congress, financial accounts, and correspondence regarding all these matters.<sup>5</sup>

These files, supplemented by data from other government, party and Cheka archival sources (as well as by information from the contemporary press and published memoirs), permit reconstruction of the genesis of the Assembly, its leadership, composition, goals, and strengths and weaknesses, at all critical moments in its brief life. They show that the history of the Assembly is of quite considerable significance but, at the same time, that it is much more complex than previously assumed.

The files suggest that the Assembly's evolution can usefully be divided into three periods, the study of which illuminates the evolution of workers' attitudes towards Soviet power during the spring and early summer of 1918 and also of changes in government responses to them. During the first period (lasting from March to May 1918), the Assembly sought to establish itself, with some success, as the legitimate voice of Petrograd labour. Apart from the fundamental causes of labour alienation mentioned above, the Assembly's efforts in this regard were facilitated by the widespread view (articulated in its initial plenary meetings) that such existing institutions as soviets, trade unions and factory committees were no longer representative of their constituencies – that, on the contrary, they had been transformed into tools of an incompetent, unresponsive, arbitrary government. The massive move of Bolsheviks from factory to military and government work also facilitated the Assembly's early growth, as did the hasty evacuation to Moscow of the Soviet national government and party leadership on 12 March. In some Petrograd factories, the sudden move – undertaken in great secrecy in the dead of night – triggered deep resentment and even panic.

Although long-time moderate socialists played prominent roles in the organisation, orientation and direction of the Assembly movement, membership lists indicate that most of them were skilled workers who had been elected as delegates by their factories. Many future Assembly members had led their fellow workers on to the streets during the February revolution. Moreover, they had facilitated moderate socialist domination of the Petrograd soviet through the spring and summer of 1917 – until they were overwhelmed by the Bolsheviks in the autumn. Once again influential in the work-place in the spring of 1918, they now tried to present the Assembly, fairly and often with considerable success, as a movement *of workers, for workers*.

At its first plenary meeting, the Assembly voted against giving representatives of political parties, as such, even a 'consultative' voice in decision making.<sup>6</sup> Assembly documents suggest that this policy of exclusion was motivated by the Assembly leadership's desire to rise above factional interests, and it reflected the frustration of rank-and-file workers with *all* political parties and with the intelligentsia generally.<sup>7</sup>

In this first stage of the Assembly's history, a majority of delegates,

who together represented some of Petrograd's most important factories and plants, hoped to work within the still fluid Soviet system to bring about a renewal of the revolution (and perhaps even re-convocation of the Constituent Assembly). Investigation of major issues of special relevance to labour was part of this effort.

It is important to note that on principle the Assembly did not make the slightest attempt to keep its activities secret. For their part, the Soviet authorities in Petrograd constantly attacked the Assembly in the press. However, they held back from taking decisive action against the Assembly – presumably because it sprang from the Bolsheviks' own primary constituency (factory workers), because it operated in the open and was a response to drastic emergencies that the Bolsheviks were unable to ease, and because the relative explosiveness and strength of the movement was difficult to gauge.

By early April, however, it was clear to the Assembly leadership that efforts to reform the existing system 'from within' were not working. Rather, all the fundamental problems that had spawned the Assembly were becoming more acute. Delegate reports at Assembly meetings at that time indicate that, although some workers retained faith in the ultimate promise of Bolshevism and of Soviet power, others increasingly were succumbing to rightist propaganda and, among other things, venting their frustration in anti-Jewish pogroms. At the same time, it appeared that the government was now ready to go to whatever extremes it deemed necessary (including sanctioning the arrest and even shooting of workers) to quell labour unrest. This in turn led to the intimidation, apathy, lethargy and passivity of other workers. In these circumstances, growth in support for the Assembly slowed down, and prospects for worker activism were uneven and unpredictable.

Within the Assembly, these realities led to splits between a vocal minority of 'optimists', who believed that aggressive steps against the government were both feasible and necessary, and 'pessimists', who had strong doubts about the possibility of mobilising workers and emerging victorious in an open clash with the government.<sup>8</sup> Yet, despite these differences, both 'optimists' and 'pessimists' supported the organisation of a May Day demonstration to protest against government policies. During the second half of April, the Assembly prepared for this event. However, confronted by Bolshevik threats

against 'protesters', a ban on political activities during Lent by the leadership of the Orthodox Church, fears of German occupation,<sup>9</sup> and still worsening economic conditions, workers did not respond to the Assembly's appeals to demonstrate. At the eleventh hour, the Assembly aborted its plans.<sup>10</sup>

The second period of the Assembly's history lasted from the beginning of May until the end of June. Several developments soon after the May Day débâcle served to reinvigorate and temporarily radicalise the Assembly. These developments included yet another drastic drop in food supplies, the shooting of protesting housewives and workers in the Petrograd suburb of Kolpino, the arbitrary arrest and abuse of workers in another Petrograd suburb, Sestroresk, the closure of newspapers and arrests of individuals who had denounced the Kolpino and Sestroresk events, and the intensification of labour unrest and conflict with the authorities in the Obukhov plant and in other Petrograd factories and districts.

Stenograms of Assembly plenary meetings during this period reveal that a turning-point in the Assembly's strategic orientation was reached in mid-May, in response to the worsening food supply crisis. If previously the Assembly leadership had hoped to work within the existing system to stimulate fundamental change, now, faced with the threat of imminent famine, it began for the first time to talk directly about the necessity of *overthrowing* the Soviet government and, in that connection, about the necessity of co-ordinating an attack on the existing regime with like-minded groups around the country (especially in Moscow).<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, rumours spread that the Petrograd authorities were about to try to suppress the Assembly. Consequently, for the rest of May and June, the Assembly concentrated its efforts on national expansion and on preparing Petrograd factory workers to respond to an attack on the Assembly with a one-day general strike. The Assembly's leaders assumed that a strike would reveal the strength of the Assembly's support among workers (in whose name the government purported to act), and would thus force the authorities to back off.

Whipping up spirit for a co-ordinated strike while at the same time holding labour protest in check until the government attacked proved difficult, however. Throughout this period, impatient workers

intensified pressure on the Assembly, and fierce arguments between the 'optimists' and 'pessimists' over how to react to this pressure now erupted at virtually all Assembly meetings. At the very end of May and the beginning of June, when a wave of strikes to protest at bread shortages broke out in the Nevskii district, a majority of Assembly delegates, after listening to contradictory reports on the mood of workers elsewhere in the city, resolved to call on striking Nevskii district workers to return to work and continue preparations for a general city-wide strike.<sup>12</sup> However, news spread that some members of the Assembly's delegation to Moscow had been arrested and that strikes followed by bloody clashes with the authorities had erupted in several areas of central Russia, and, moreover, a rebellion launched by Obukhov workers and sailors from a mine-laying flotilla moored on the Neva had been brutally suppressed (followed by a lockout and firing of all Obukhov workers). In response to these events, on 26 June (at what was destined to be its final meeting), even the 'pessimists' voted in favour of trying to organise a city-wide general strike for 2 July.<sup>13</sup> To most delegates (both optimists and pessimists), it appeared to be a question of 'now or never'.

Even before the strike date, on 27 June, the Petrograd authorities drew on the dubious mandate provided by stacked Petrograd soviet elections to justify banning the Extraordinary Assembly.<sup>14</sup> Also, in part as a result of extreme government intimidation, the response to the Assembly's strike call on 2 July was negligible.<sup>15</sup> In the ultra-repressive atmosphere that reigned in Petrograd after these developments (coupled with the intensification of the reaction caused by the failed rebellion of the Left SRs on 6–7 July), the Assembly was doomed. On 19 July, the Bureau met for the last time. The protocol of this meeting (obviously drafted in great haste) indicates that it dealt exclusively with vacating the Assembly's headquarters and paying and releasing staff.<sup>16</sup>

Developments during the third and last period in the Assembly's history took place in Moscow, and were exclusively concerned with organising a national workers' congress aimed at giving worker representatives from all over the country an opportunity to seek solutions to Russia's problems. At its last meetings, the Assembly had agreed to call a congress of workers representing labour from industrial centres, primarily in the northern and central regions – this in preparation for an early national workers' congress. Moreover, it had despatched several

of its key members to Moscow to help prepare the regional congress. A preliminary planning meeting was held in Moscow on 28 June. With delegates from Petrograd, Moscow and several other industrial centres participating, it formed an organising committee and agreed to convene the regional congress in Moscow on 20 July.<sup>17</sup>

The organising committee began operating immediately. However, its efforts were undermined from the start by the disintegration of the Assembly in Petrograd and by repressive conditions in Moscow. So few delegates had arrived in Moscow on 20 July that the start of the regional congress was postponed until 22 July. On 21 July, delegates already in Moscow held a 'private meeting' at which the necessity of scaling down the designation of the next day's gathering, and its agenda as well, was agreed upon. Barring a significant increase in participation, the gathering was now to be called a meeting (*soveshchanie*), rather than a congress or even a conference; moreover, instead of drafting positions on critical political, economic and foreign policy issues for an early national workers' congress, the 'meeting' was to listen to 'local reports' and to deal primarily with organisational questions related to the purpose and convocation of the national congress.<sup>18</sup> Judging by protocols and testimony in Cheka files, the 35 or so participants in sessions of this 'meeting' on the evening of 22 July and part of the following morning had barely begun to address even this constricted agenda when their deliberations were broken up by Red Guards and all arrested and jailed.<sup>19</sup>

The files of the Extraordinary Assembly of Delegates from Petrograd Factories and Plants are a marvellous source for studying the evolution of workers' attitudes (and differentiations among workers in different plants and branches of industry) between March and July 1918. But that is not all. Elsewhere, I have suggested that the crisis of spring and summer 1918 was the most serious threat to Soviet power in Petrograd during the entire civil war era. Information from the archives of the Extraordinary Assembly of Delegates from Petrograd Factories supports this hypothesis. A variety of archival sources (not just those in the Assembly's files) reveal that the Soviet authorities in Petrograd, despite their bravado in the press, were profoundly worried by the threat posed by the Assembly and fully aware of their growing isolation from workers (their only real social base). This sense of vulnerability was reflected in the ever more desperate appeals for huge emergency

subsidies that Grigorii Zinoviev, as head of the Petrograd government, sent to the Sovnarkom in Moscow during that time.<sup>20</sup> Attacked from all sides and being continually drained of experienced personnel, Petrograd Bolsheviks developed a siege mentality and a corresponding disposition to consider any action – from suppression of the opposition press and manipulation of elections to terror even against workers – to be justified in the struggle to retain power until the start of the imminent world revolution.

In illuminating the changing dynamics of the relationship between workers and the Soviet state in the spring and early summer of 1918, the Assembly files thus help to clarify apparent incongruities between Bolshevik ideals and goals in 1917 and the rapid emergence of Bolshevik authoritarianism.

## Notes

1. Between 1 January and the beginning of April 1918, approximately 134,000 workers, or 46 per cent of Petrograd's industrial work-force, joined the ranks of the city's unemployed (TsGA SPb, f. 9618, op. 1, d. 185, l. 50–51).
2. Referring to initial meetings of the Assembly as early as January 1918, N.B. Bogdanova has probably confused the Assembly with meetings of factory representatives convened by the Union for the Defence of the Constituent Assembly: see N.B. Bogdanova, *Moi otets men'shevik* (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 64.
3. G.A. Aronson, *Dvizhenie upolnomochennykh fabrik i zavodov v 1918 godu* (New York, 1960). Aronson's memoir was originally written in Paris in 1938.
4. This view is reflected in a valuable collection of related materials (primarily excerpts from newspapers and published documents) prepared by Michael Bernshtam: see *Nezavisimoe rabochee dvizhenie v 1918 godu: dokumenty i materialy* (Paris, 1981).
5. TsGA SPb, f. 3390, op. 1, d. 1–21.
6. TsGA SPb, f. 3390, op. 1, d. 13, l. 2. Although prominent moderate socialist party officials, especially Mensheviks, helped to initiate the Assembly movement in the first place, Vladimir Brovkin exaggerates their leadership role thereafter: see Vladimir N. Brovkin, *The Mensheviks After October: Socialist Opposition and the Rise of the Bolshevik Dictatorship* (Ithaca, NY, and London, 1987), p. 174.
7. The fact that many delegates who were earlier either Mensheviks or SRs registered in the Assembly as politically unaffiliated (*bespartiiinyi*) was to a large extent less an attempt at camouflage (although there was some of that) than yet another reflection of this mood.
8. These terms were used at the time to distinguish between the two viewpoints: see,



for example, TsGA SPb, f. 3390, op. 1, d. 13, l. 149.

9. During this time, aggressive German operations in the Baltic appeared to herald the imminent occupation of Petrograd.
10. Significantly, workers were similarly cool towards participation in May Day festivities sponsored by the Petrograd Soviet: see, for example, reports on Vyborg district workers in TsGAIPD SPb, f. 2, op. 1, d. 4, l. 3–4.
11. See, especially, comments on this issue at the Assembly's plenary meeting on 15 May (TsGA SPb, f. 3390, op. 1, d. 13, l. 125–32).
12. *Ibid.*, l. 156–69, 172–81.
13. *Ibid.*, l. 219–25. Aronson writes that an Assembly meeting was held on 29 June: Aronson, *Dvizhenie upolnomochennykh*, p. 17. However, on the basis of information in Assembly files, it seems clear that the gathering to which he refers was either a meeting of a large strike committee formed by the Assembly on 26 June, or a meeting of the Assembly's Bureau which met on 29 June.
14. These elections were held between 18 and 25 June. In voting at factories, SRs, unaligned candidates and Mensheviks did quite well, especially in larger plants and printing establishments. However, under regulations prepared by the Bolsheviks and adopted by the 'old' Petrograd soviet, more than half of the projected 700-plus deputies in the 'new' soviet were to be elected by the Bolshevik-dominated district soviets, trade unions, factory committees, Red Army and naval units, and district worker conferences; thus, the Bolsheviks were assured of a solid majority even before factory voting began.
15. Among other things, all newspapers were forced to print on their front pages Petrograd soviet resolutions condemning the Assembly as part of the domestic and foreign counter-revolution. Factories participating in the strike were warned that they would be shut down and individual strikers were threatened with the loss of work – threats that were subsequently made good. Agitators and members of strike committees were subject to immediate arrest. Printing plants suspected of opposition sympathies were sealed, the offices of hostile trade unions were raided, martial law was declared on rail lines, and armed strike-breaking patrols with authority to take whatever action was necessary to prevent work stoppages were formed and put on 24-hour duty at key points throughout Petrograd.
16. TsGA SPb, f. 3390, op. 1, d. 12, l. 33–4.
17. TsGA SPb, f. 3390, op. 1, d. 4, l. 3–4.
18. TsA FSB, f. 1, op. 2, d. 126, l. 87–87ob.
19. *Ibid.*, l. 114–19; see also TsGA SPb, f. 3390, op. 1, d. 4, l. 5–18; and TsA FSB, T. 1, l. 135–74, and T.2, l. 16, 18, 58, 76, 83, 90, 104 and 123.

The protocols of these sessions in the FSB archive are cryptic and, judging by subsequent testimony, often confused. None the less, they are of interest because of the insights which they provide into the behaviour of government and labour under the impact of civil war, unemployment, disease and hunger. The value of organising a national workers' congress was not disputed and the relationship of this congress to Soviet power as it then existed was barely mentioned (which subsequently complicated the Cheka's 'case'). The only substantive issue that triggered argument was the feasibility of forming a single, powerful national workers' 'union' or 'party', free of influence from the intelligentsia. This question

(like the idea of a national workers' congress) was in part a reflection of the same worker disenchantment with all existing political parties that had contributed to the rise of the Extraordinary Assembly in the first place.

20. See, for example, GARF, f. 130, op. 2, d. 342, l. 40 and 40 ob. The Sovnarkom often treated Zinoviev's panicked requests with notable reserve.

# 4 Out of the Dustbin of History

## New Data on the Revolutionary Communist Party from the Saratov and Central Communist Party Archives

Donald J. Raleigh

A provocative theme discussed in contemporary social theory is the notion that 'societies exert control over their subjects not just by imposing constraints on them but by predetermining the ways they attempt to rebel against those constraints, by co-opting their strategies of dissent'.<sup>1</sup> This idea owes a good deal to the work of the French intellectual Michel Foucault, who investigated the ways in which power tends to organise and channel dissenting forces, rather than repress them.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to apply these insights to a preliminary study of the Revolutionary Communist Party in Saratov province during the Civil War. Drawing on materials found in the former Saratov and Central Communist Party Archives, as well as on related archive material and published records,<sup>3</sup> I seek to retrieve the party from the dustbin of history by clarifying its contribution to the survival of Soviet power, its relationship to Bolshevism, and the reasons for the Revolutionary Communists' ultimate decline in 1920.

*Revolutionary Communists?* Admittedly, this is not a household term. Western historians essentially know nothing about them,<sup>4</sup> while the small number of Soviet historians who wrote about the party dismissed it as a group of former Left SRs who broke with its Central Committee after the murder of the German ambassador, Count Mirbach, in July 1918, in order to form a separate party that eventually collapsed under

the weight of its own 'ideological contradictions'.<sup>5</sup> Yet from mid-1918 until October 1920, the Revolutionary Communists (RCs) participated in the ruling coalition in Saratov province, attracting a substantial following in several key districts (*uezdy*) and district towns, and also elsewhere in the Ural and Volga regions. Perhaps the most important supplier of grain to the urban centre of the Communist-controlled heartland, front-line Saratov province remained Red throughout the Civil War, largely owing to the hybrid form of left-socialist radicalism that had emerged there, of which Revolutionary Communism was an essential part.

Although Revolutionary Communist Party organisations eventually existed in more than 15 provinces, the party was most prominent in Saratov province, owing to specific historical and geographical circumstances. There, a Bolshevik-Left SR bloc contributed singularly to the spread and consolidation of Soviet power in 1918, especially at the district level, where a radical populist tradition had been in the making since the turn of the century. To be sure, real differences separated the two radical parties at the same time, but the Saratov Left SR organisation's commitment to class war, revolution and Soviet power created a potent alliance that weathered the controversy over the Brest-Litovsk Peace, which had poisoned relations between the two parties' central committees.<sup>6</sup> The arrival in Saratov of Left SR activists from Poltava and Kharkov in the spring of 1918 strengthened the alliance, for the newcomers backed Soviet power locally when it faced a series of grave crises.<sup>7</sup>

Conflict flaring up within the Left SR party leadership over tactics, which presaged the break-up of the party in the summer of 1918, found resonance along the Volga after well-known figures such as A.M. Ustinov and P.F. Sapozhnikov appeared in Saratov to set up a regional party centre for the express purpose of uniting those who opposed the Central Committee's 'destructive' tactics aimed at undermining the Brest-Litovsk Peace. Saratov offered a favourable atmosphere, for the local Left SR organisation had protested at the 'revolutionary fantasy and political emotionalism' of the party's Central Committee, and maintained excellent relations with the Bolsheviks.<sup>8</sup> The latter understood the critical importance of the Left SRs' support: more than half the delegates to a provincial peasant congress in May were Left SRs, and Ustinov and Sapozhnikov sat on the congress's presidium. When

an anti-Bolshevik uprising broke out in Saratov in mid-May 1918, an armed guard of Left SRs rose to the soviet's defence. Other threats to Soviet power, such as the revolt of Czechoslovak troops along the Volga at the end of the month and explosions of discontent in neighbouring provinces, followed hard on the heels of the May uprising. As the rhetoric of Soviet power at the local level became more militant, reflecting a growing siege mentality, the Saratov soviet expelled its socialist opposition (but not the Left SRs) *before* the Central Executive Committee took similar steps at the national level.<sup>9</sup>

Study of the reaction in Saratov to the assassination of Count Mirbach in the capital in conjunction with the Fifth Congress of Soviets, generally cited as the opening salvo in the so-called Left-SR uprising, does not shed much light on the historiographical controversy surrounding the event, but it does demonstrate serious factionalism within the Left SR party and considerable hostility towards its Central Committee.<sup>10</sup> The Saratov Left SR organisation immediately distanced itself from the party's Central Committee, calling for a national party council (*sovet*) to be held in Saratov on 21 July. Emphatically denying that the entire party bore responsibility for the actions of its Central Committee, Ustinov and Sapozhnikov reaffirmed the primacy of the class struggle in a united front with the Bolsheviks against the enemies of Soviet power for the triumph of the social revolution.<sup>11</sup> True, some party members suggested that not all the facts surrounding the July events were known, and that local Left SRs must morally support their Central Committee. But when delegates representing thirteen organisations convened in Saratov they condemned Mirbach's murder and reiterated the need to set up a new party.

The events surrounding the murder of Mirbach sundered the Left SR party, in part because the Bolsheviks expressed a desire to continue working with those Left SRs who condemned the policies of their Central Committee. A large number of Left SRs joined the Bolsheviks, while others formed two new parties, the Revolutionary Communists (*Revoliutsionnye kommunisty*) and the Popular Communists (*Narodniki-kommunisty*). Founded in Moscow at the end of September 1918, the Revolutionary Communist Party renounced the use of force to undermine the Brest-Litovsk Peace, acts of terror by members of Soviet parties, open struggle against the ruling party, and any policies that weakened the class character of the revolution, 'which through civil

war will lead to socialism'. The Central Committee selected at the congress comprised a number of 'Saratovites', including Ustinov.<sup>12</sup> The new party programme owed a great deal to the radical populist principles found in the SR Party's maximum programme, approved in 1906. Dividing society into two groups, the toilers and those who exploited them, Revolutionary Communists acknowledged that the events of October 1917 had underscored the central role of the proletariat in the revolution, but they held that the narrow dictatorship of the proletariat had significance *only* during the period of the seizure of power and destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus. Emphasising that Russia was a *peasant* country, they rejected the Bolsheviks' efforts to recast society without taking the peasantry into consideration,<sup>13</sup> and argued that a dictatorship of all toiling elements (*vlast' trudiashchikhsia*) was essential for building a new social order. Confident of their ability to compete with the Bolsheviks in constructing a rival version of the revolutionary tale, the Revolutionary Communists believed that they could redirect Bolshevik policies without undermining the alliance with them.<sup>14</sup>

This was more easily said than done, however, for the Revolutionary Communists immediately found themselves at odds with their ally over a variety of issues – for example, the introduction of the committees of the village poor (*kombedy*). Lamenting that 'the dictatorship of the proletariat had become a dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party', they maintained that the Bolsheviks' clumsy efforts at socialising the economy were creating a form of 'state socialism' that excluded most peasants. Again and again, the party called for uniting all revolutionary-minded elements of the population to effect changes *in union with* the Bolsheviks, thereby preventing 'broad segments of the toiling masses from rising up against the Bolsheviks and consequently against Soviet power'.<sup>15</sup>

A pattern emerged early. Until the very end of their existence, the Revolutionary Communists offered a rival interpretation of the unfolding revolution, but did not waver in their commitment to Soviet power or in their willingness to subordinate their party to the Bolsheviks when they felt that the fate of the revolution was at stake. Often they explained questionable Bolshevik practices as a consequence of temporary circumstances brought about by civil war, noting that the disagreement between the two parties' methods of socialist construction

could be resolved by the *organic* evolution of new socio-economic forms. While declaring the proletariat and the toiling peasantry to be equal players in the revolutionary drama, they expressed their unequivocal support for the Bolsheviks: '... despite their methods of constructing [socialism], we support them, for the main task of the moment is the battle against capitalism ...'.<sup>16</sup>

Be that as it may, the archival record disputes the assessment of the Soviet historian Iu.I. Shestak, who claims that 'the Bolsheviks in the provinces showed the utmost good will in establishing relations with Revolutionary Communist organisations ...'.<sup>17</sup> In some district towns, the Moscow events of mid-summer 1918 had damaged relations between Left SRs and Bolsheviks, despite the conciliatory tone taken by the Saratov Left SRs. Bolshevik leaders in the localities were often outsiders, sent by Moscow or Saratov to bolster Soviet power; many of them now clashed with the influential Left SRs<sup>18</sup> as disagreements flared up over representation at local peasant congresses, and then as elections took place to village and *volost* soviets in early 1919. In Balashov, Bolsheviks disbanded the RC organisation in early 1919. In Atkarsk, Bolsheviks declared the local Revolutionary Communist organisation illegal, incarcerated the party's *uezd* committee, and resorted to intimidation, armed force and arrest in order to overturn election results or to secure pro-Bolshevik soviet executive committees in the countryside.<sup>19</sup>

Both national and local considerations, however, compelled the Communist Party to adopt a new spirit of accommodation in relating to the Revolutionary Communists. In February 1919, Moscow declared the Revolutionary Communists a 'Soviet' (that is, legal) party. At the Eighth Party Congress in March 1919, the Bolsheviks softened their dictatorship of the proletariat by openly courting the middle peasantry. As A.I. Denikin's armies pounded their way up the Volga, and the Central Committee of the RC Party appealed to Moscow to investigate abuses of power and the use of force in local soviet elections,<sup>20</sup> Saratov Bolsheviks agreed to let Revolutionary Communists take part in local government and carry out party work in the villages, thereby ending the period of 'merciless coercion'.<sup>21</sup> A candid report of the Saratov Provincial Executive Committee on the mood in the villages reveals how vulnerable Soviet power was at that time. Although the report criticises the Revolutionary Communists' opposition to Bolshevik

agrarian policy, it notes that the party's provincial committee did not waver in its loyalty to Soviet power.<sup>22</sup> In fact, the chairman of the provincial RC committee, Sapozhnikov, exhorted all party members to create a united front to defend Soviet power, and 'in case of disagreements with Bolsheviks at the local level, investigate the matter and disband the [party] organisations'.<sup>23</sup> Despite such accommodation, the Bolsheviks controlled – or sought to control – the complete range of activities of their socialist ally.<sup>24</sup>

The sources also suggest that leaders of the two parties ensconced in Saratov found it easier to co-operate than did cadres in the district towns and villages, perhaps because the RCs tended to be stronger at the local level. When Bolshevik organisations in Volsk and Atkarsk invited the RCs to join local executive committees, some Bolsheviks continued to ignore the new line and their press characterised the RCs as a party of kulaks.<sup>25</sup> Local Bolsheviks also complained that the RCs stirred up the peasantry against Soviet power by promoting the slogans, 'Down with the Bolsheviks! Long Live Soviet power!'. In general, Bolsheviks in the countryside often depicted their 'allies' as a petit-bourgeois party comprising kulaks, counter-revolutionaries and even 'criminals'. Owing to the hostility of local Bolsheviks, Revolutionary Communist activists from the villages and district towns expressed their concern over the Saratov party committee's unequivocal support for the Bolsheviks,<sup>26</sup> and sought to extract a price for their commitment to Soviet power, often resorting to the same tactics as the Bolsheviks to secure or strengthen representation in *uezd* congresses. At the end of 1919, Revolutionary Communists in Volsk blasted out against Bolshevik land policies and called upon their comrades to carry out independent work within the land department 'to end the use of force against ... the peasants';<sup>27</sup> Revolutionary Communist reports from Atkarsk read like 'indictments against the Bolsheviks', whom RC activists viewed as 'dirty riffraff' and 'political speculators', seeking to avoid being packed off to the front.<sup>28</sup>

Whatever co-operation existed between the two parties tended to break down as soon as the threat posed by the Whites receded, especially in those *uezds* where local Bolshevik leaders took pride in their revolutionary pedigree.<sup>29</sup> As a result, during the second half of 1919 the Revolutionary Communists continued to decry the Communists' efforts to limit revolutionary populism's representation at



local congresses.<sup>30</sup> Take, for example, the situation in Atkarsk, which boasted the most powerful RC organisation. A local Bolshevik insisted that the RCs were 'nothing more and nothing less than a blockhead with eyes'. Emphasising the RCs' lack of ideas, he acknowledged that the party 'is needed by us while it fulfils all our orders. When it stops fulfilling them, we'll throw them out on their ears.'<sup>31</sup> In September 1919 the Atkarsk RC committee reported to Saratov that 'relations with the Bolsheviks have been growing worse and worse'.<sup>32</sup> In October the RCs protested at the arrest of party members, purportedly for no reason at all. In the following month, RCs refused to reveal the location of their party cells in the countryside or how many members the party had. Bolshevik insistence that this information was requested for informational purposes fell on deaf ears.<sup>33</sup>

In late 1919 and early 1920, reports flowed in from the rural areas regarding the arrest of Revolutionary Communists and other efforts to disband party committees. Complaints were lodged regarding police harassment and Bolshevik attempts to discredit the RCs as 'counter-revolutionary' and even 'criminal' elements.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, RC leaders continued to maintain that the close co-operation of both socialist parties was essential in order to bolster Soviet power.<sup>35</sup> Turning to Atkarsk once again, we see how vital such support was for the Communist Party. Revolutionary Communists constituted 19 of the 44 deputies sent from the *uezd* to a provincial congress of soviets in Saratov.<sup>36</sup>

The numerical strength of the Revolutionary Communists in Atkarsk and elsewhere clearly troubled the Bolsheviks. While the elliptical sources do not allow us to determine with any precision the size of the party's membership, they do suggest that the estimates of Soviet historians seem too low, especially when we consider that the Revolutionary Communists were reluctant to report how many cells actually existed in the villages. At the end of 1918, the party had about 2,000 followers in Saratov province, including 355 in Volsk and 758 in Atkarsk *uezd*, making it approximately half the size of the Bolshevik party. After Lenin's party sought accommodation with the Revolutionary Communists in the spring of 1919, their fortunes rose rapidly, and in size they came to approximate that of the provincial Bolshevik organisation. When Saratov was under siege in late summer 1919, party organisations existed in five out of ten *uezds* and RCs could be found in

four *uezd* executive committees and in two of their presidiums. They also fared well in elections to congresses of soviets in some districts. The sources indicate that new members continued to join the party and new cells formed, and collapsed, throughout the party's existence. As of 1 February 1920, there were 23 active party cells in Atkarsk *uezd*, with about 800 members and sympathisers. While the RCs did not represent 'a serious threat at the national level', a confidential report from mid-1920 admits their strength in Saratov province, especially in Saratov, Atkarsk and Volsk districts. All in all, the party's size does not appear to be very different from that of the Bolsheviks until the end of 1919, when the latter actively campaigned to recruit new members.<sup>37</sup>

What accounts for the party's inability to capitalise on its political influence? Serious problems beset it from the outset, which had much to do with a confused identity and with serious disagreements over how to reconcile pronounced support for Soviet power, on the one hand, with opposition to specific Bolshevik policies on the other. They also had a lot to do with sustained pressure from the Bolsheviks, which promoted defections from the party.<sup>38</sup> As a legal party, the RCs were liable for frequent mobilisations;<sup>39</sup> during the summer of 1919, participation in such campaigns depleted the party's ranks and resulted in the collapse of local groups. The existence of two parties whose official names contained the word 'communist' also bred so much confusion that some Saratov Communists began calling themselves Bolsheviks once again, rather than Communists.<sup>40</sup> In addition, by late 1919 the dilemma arising from the existence of other populist groups came to a head. After a heated dispute the Revolutionary Communists' Central Committee narrowly defeated a proposal to join together *all* revolutionary populist parties into a new party, Revolutionary Socialism.<sup>41</sup>

As we shall see, the Revolutionary Communist Party's recognition of the authority of the Third Communist International also limited its options, whereas the Bolshevik victory over the Whites in 1920 compelled the leading theorists Sapozhnikov and Ustinov to break with some long-held populist principles. In explaining why social revolution had taken place in 'backward' Russia, Sapozhnikov argued in early 1920 that the dictatorship of the proletariat had evolved *logically*, that opposition to it was *reactionary*, and that it would eventually contribute to establishing a dictatorship of *all* toilers. Meanwhile, Ustinov,

rejecting potential criticism that he had abandoned the populist world-view in favour of the Marxist one, called upon his comrades to put an end to many of their beliefs (now prejudices), which history had shown to be wrong.<sup>42</sup> Discussion over the militarisation of labour proved to be another bone of contention. The party Central Committee clearly stood at a cross-roads: it disbanded a party congress in 1920 despite the wish of the majority of delegates.<sup>43</sup> When the Second Comintern Congress in July 1920 ruled that only one communist party in each country could be represented in the Comintern, Ustinov and Sapozhnikov declared their Central Committee's readiness to subordinate the party to the decisions of the International.<sup>44</sup> The Sixth Congress of the Revolutionary Communist Party in late September 1920 resolved to merge with the Bolsheviks.<sup>45</sup>

This brief look at the Revolutionary Communists in Saratov places a different accent on Schapiro's contention that 'by refraining from any criticism of communist practices, the Revolutionary Communists purchased a period of free existence'.<sup>46</sup> The Revolutionary Communists did not co-operate with the Bolsheviks merely because they wanted to save their party from collapse, but also because they were tactically committed to a united front with the Communists. Willing to subordinate their own programmatic goals to those of the Bolsheviks in order to save the revolution in Russia, the RCs believed that they could ultimately influence the Bolsheviks to broaden the party's mass base. Revolutionary Communists criticised the Bolsheviks on many counts, and as a result the relationship between the two parties had an inherent tension, the mirror image of which was the need each had for the other, especially when faced with military threat from White forces. In the final analysis, the evidence adduced here reinforces Oskar Anweiler's assertion that 'in crises the loyalty or conditional support of these groups [other socialist parties] was valued, but when danger diminished, they were ignored'.<sup>47</sup> But the evidence also suggests that matters were more complex than this.

As we have seen, the Revolutionary Communist Party made its greatest contribution at the *uezd* level. Soviet power was established in the district towns and from there spread to the surrounding villages owing to the popularity of the Left SRs and to the implementation of what in effect was the SR land programme. Co-operation within the radical bloc reached its high point in the first half of 1918 and the

revolutionary solidarity expressed at that time helps to explain the RC party's sustained backing of Soviet power, even when policies of the latter alienated the RCs' own popular support among the peasantry. Moreover, the Communist Party's tactical shifts in regard to the middle peasantry after the Eighth Party Congress, and the need to fortify its alliance with other radical groups as White forces moved against the Russian heartland, breathed a second wind into this radical alliance whose foundation had otherwise been shaken. The sources *do not* permit a confident assessment of the party's numerical strength, but they *do* document its significance, and undermine the view found in the literature that the party exercised no or little political influence. I would argue that the party's sustained commitment to Soviet power proved *the decisive* factor in keeping Saratov province from falling to the Whites in 1919 as a result of a rejection of Soviet power from within, and perhaps once again in 1921.

Let us return to the notion that societies not only predetermine how their subjects rebel against constraints but also co-opt strategies of dissent. Ironically, and perhaps because the Bolshevik hold on power remained shaky during the Civil War, the process of co-optation between them and their populist ally remained a two-way street. From the time of the RCs' crystallisation from radical populism, the party saw its main purpose as the need to convince the Communists to broaden their narrow dictatorship of the proletariat to include all toiling masses. The Bolsheviks' change of heart in regard to the middle peasants in the spring of 1919 (co-optation of their opponents' criticism?) might actually have convinced the RCs that they were beginning to influence their Bolshevik comrades. Yet by the time the military confrontations associated with the Civil War drew to a close and the Bolshevik leadership faced the prospect of rebuilding a ravaged country, several prominent Revolutionary Communists saw merger with the Bolsheviks as a viable option. The Bolsheviks had fared well in the discursive struggle among those who remained committed to Soviet power. The RCs from the start had accepted an important part of the Bolsheviks' version of the revolutionary tale (for example, regarding the role of the proletariat in the revolution), and now that the Whites had been defeated the Bolshevik variant seemed even more compelling. Those Revolutionary Communists who found it difficult to accept this were driven into the opposition. For the rest of the party

members, merger with the Communists merely exonerated their behaviour since mid-summer 1918.<sup>48</sup> For their part, the Bolsheviks absorbed more than individual Revolutionary Communist Party members in late 1920. Read Lenin's speech at the Tenth Party Congress justifying the introduction of the New Economic Policy: his attitude towards the peasantry bears an uncanny resemblance to the Revolutionary Communists' notion of *vlast' trudiashchikhsia*.

## Notes

1. Gerald Graff, 'Co-optation', in H. Aram Veese (ed.), *The New Historicism* (New York, 1989), pp. 168–9.
2. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. I, *An Introduction*, translated by Richard Hurley (New York, 1978), pp. 17–49.
3. SOPA, *Saratovskii oblastnoi partiinyi arkhiv*, now SOTsDNI, *Saratovskii oblastnoi tsentr dokumentatsii noveishei istorii*, fond 151/95, *Partiia Revoliutsionnogo Kommunizma*; f. 27, *Saratovskii Gubkom VKP(b)*; and f. 200, *Atkarskii ukom VKP(b)*. Also, in Moscow, RTsKhIDNI, f. 282. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the staff at SOTsDNI for their assistance and to express my special thanks to the staff at GASO (*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Saratovskoi oblasti*) for their many kindnesses.
4. Leonard Schapiro's classic study devotes only a page to the Revolutionary Communists, while Orlando Figes's study of the Volga countryside during the Civil War and Vladimir Brovkin's monograph on political parties do not mention them at all! See Leonard Schapiro, *The Origins of the Communist Autocracy: Political Opposition in the Soviet State. First phase, 1917–1922*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 180–81; Orlando Figes, *Peasant Russia Civil War: The Volga Countryside in Revolution, 1917–1921* (Oxford, 1989); Vladimir N. Brovkin, *Behind the Lines of the Civil War: Political Parties and Social Movements in Russia, 1918–1922* (Princeton, 1994).
5. The fullest treatment I have found of the party are in the works of Iu.I. Shestak, *Bol'sheviki i levye techeniia melkoburzhaznoi demokratii* (Moscow, 1974); idem, *Taktika bol'shevikov po otnosheniiu k partii levyykh eserov i otklonovshimsia ot nee partiiam revoliutsionnykh kommunistov i narodnikov-kommunistov* (Moscow, 1971); idem, 'Vzaimootnosheniia bol'shevikov s levymi melkoburzhaznymi partiiami i gruppami v gody grazhdanskoi voiny', in I.I. Mints (ed.), *Bankrotstvo melkoburzhaznykh partii Rossii, 1917–1922 gg.* (Moscow, 1977), pp. 126–36; idem, 'Bankrotstvo partii "Revoliutsionnykh kommunistov" v Povolzh'e', *Povolzhskii krai*, 1975, no. 4, pp. 24–38; and idem, 'RKP(b) i partiia "revoliutsionnogo kommunizma"', *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1972, no. 2, pp. 19–29. A chapter (pp. 172–205) in M.V. Spirina, *Krakh melkoburzhaznoi kontseptsii sotsializma eserov* (Moscow, 1987), discusses the party's 'evolution' towards Bolshevism, but is

based on a limited source base and, like the studies by Shestak, says little about the specific historical and geographical contexts in which the party emerged in Saratov. Only the briefest mention of the party can be found in standard Soviet works such as K. Gusev, *Krakh partii levykh eserov* (Moscow, 1963). The only attempt to analyse the party's role in Saratov province during the Civil War is a short, tendentious essay by M. Sagrad'ian, 'Iz istorii vozniknoveniia odnopartiinoi sistemy v Sovetskoi respublike', in *Istoriia partiinykh organizatsii Povolzh'ia (Mezhvuzovskii nauchnyi sbornik)*, vyp. 1 (Saratov, 1973), pp. 108–23. A crude 'Soviet' representation of the party is to be found in *Ocherki istorii Saratovskoi partiinoi organizatsii KPSS. Chast' 2, 1918–1937* (Saratov, 1965), p. 107.

6. For a discussion of the Bolshevik–Left SR bloc, see Donald J. Raleigh, *Revolution on the Volga: 1917 in Saratov* (Ithaca, 1986); see also Partiiia levykh sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov (internatsionalistov), *Programma i ustav partii levykh sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov (internatsionalistov)* (Saratov, 1918), p. 7; idem, *Materialy po peresmotru partiinoi programmy*, Vol. 3, *Sbornik statei po peresmotru programmy* (Moscow, 1918). For a discussion of the emergence of the Left SRs in Saratov, see the remarks of Ezhov at the first party congress: *Protokoly pervogo s"ezda partii levykh sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov (internatsionalistov)* (Moscow, 1918), p. 9. Articles published in the newspaper *Znamia truda* and later as a separate anthology on the eve of the Left SR Second Party Congress in April 1918 note that the party's maximum programme complemented that of the Bolsheviks.
7. In particular, Bolshevik fortunes waned during elections to the Saratov soviet in April 1918: see *Znamia revoliutsii*, No. 3 (95), 7 November 1918, p. 4.
8. Partiiia levykh sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov (internatsionalistov), *Vokrug moskovskikh iul'skikh sobytii: Sbornik statei* (Saratov, 1918), pp. 11, 31.
9. See Chapter 2 of my forthcoming study, 'The Experience of Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture on the Volga, 1918–1922'. According to S.V. Terekhin, the local Left SRs' dissatisfaction with Bolshevik agrarian policies caused concern within the Bolshevik organisation which, at the end of June, resolved to break off joint agitation work with their populist comrades: see *Gody ognevye: Saratovskaia organizatsiia bol'shevikov v period Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii i grazhdanskoi voiny* (Saratov, 1967), p. 139.
10. Most historians accept the notion of an uprising, while a few historians (namely G. Katkov and Iu. Fel'shtinskii) argue that the Bolsheviks had actually conspired against the Left SRs. Calling for a reassessment, Lutz Hafner convincingly shows that there is no hard evidence to back the Bolshevik conspiracy charge; on the other hand, he maintains that 'the Bolsheviks consciously and quite successfully aimed to split and thereby destroy the Left SR party': see his 'The Assassination of Count Mirbach and the "July Uprising" of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries in Moscow, 1918', *Russian Review*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (July 1991), pp. 324–44 (quotation on p. 340), and *Die Partei der Linken Sozial-Revolutionäre in der russischen Revolution von 1917/18* (Cologne, 1994).
11. Partiiia levykh sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov (internatsionalistov), *Materialy k Vse-rossiiskoi konferentsii Partii levykh s.r. (internatsionalistov) v g. Saratove (Iul', 1918 g.)* (Saratov, 1918), pp. 7–21, and *Vokrug moskovskikh sobytii*, pp. 3–14, 34–8.

12. Gusev, *Krakh partii levyykh eserov*, p. 226; other resolutions from the congress are to be found in *Znamia revoliutsii*, No. 1 (93), 21 October 1918, pp. 3–4; see also RTsKhIDNI, f. 282, op. 2, d. 3, ll. 1–5 ob.
13. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 3, d. 1, l. 13.
14. See, for example, *Znamia revoliutsii*, No. 1 (93), 21 October 1918, p. 1; Spirina, *Krakh melko-burzhuaiznoi kontseptsii*, pp. 174–6, 184; SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 14, ll. 1, 3, 4 ob.
15. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 12, ll. 7–10.
16. Ibid., f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 42, ll. 7–8, 10–11, 19, 22–4; op. 1, d. 44, ll. 12, 17 (quotation in d. 44, l. 12).
17. Shestak, *Bol'sheviki i levye techeniia*, pp. 40–41.
18. Some examples are to be found in TsGAOR (GARF), f. 393, op. 3, d. 333, ll. 19 ob–20; f. 393, op. 3, d. 327, l. 103; *Znamia revoliutsii*, No. 4 (96), 29 November 1918, p. 4; and *Krasnaia kommuna* (Atkarsk), No. 80 (29 November 1918), p. 4. Of course, there were exceptions: events took a more conciliatory form in Kuznetsk: see *Znamia revoliutsii*, No. 1 (93), 21 October 1918, p. 4.
19. These examples are to be found in *Izvestiia Balashovskogo ispolnitel'nogo komiteta*, No. 17 (25 January 1919), p. 4; SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 2, d. 16, ll. 12–13; op. 2, d. 41, ll. 2–3; op. 1, d. 52, ll. 2–5, 16–17; op. 2, d. 4, l. 8; *Krasnaia kommuna*, No. 150 (28 February 1919), pp. 3–4; *Krasnaia gazeta* (Saratov), No. 301 (6 March 1919), p. 2; and SOTsDNI, f. 200, op. 1, d. 90, ll. 1–1 ob.
20. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 48, ll. 17–20.
21. This followed the visit to Atkarsk of an agent of the Central Committee, I.P. Flerovskii, a former member of the Kronstadt soviet and delegate to the Bolsheviks' Sixth Party Congress, who became a member of the Saratov *gubkom* and *gubispolkom* in June 1919: GASO, f. 456, op. 1, ed. khr. 48, l. 103; SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 48, l. 12.
22. GASO, f. 521, op. 3, d. 15.
23. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 49, l. 25. Sapozhnikov's telegram is to be found in d. 98, l. 3; similar telegrams earmarked for specific *uezd* committees are to be found in op. 1, d. 56, ll. 12–17, and in d. 52, ll. 7–8. Interestingly enough, the Volsk Bolshevik committee agreed to compromise with the RCs, but 'under no circumstances' to accept minority representative status: see SOTsDNI, f. 27, op. 1, d. 236, l. 12. At roughly the same time, the Third Party Congress of the Revolutionary Communist Party called upon all organisations to send responsible members to the eastern front; however, the party took advantage of Bolshevik vulnerability to criticise the organisational structure of the Red Army: see f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 46, ll. 4, 5.
24. For example, N. Poliantseva et al. (eds), *Saratovskaia partiinaia organizatsiia v gody grazhdanskoi voiny: Dokumenty i materialy, 1918–1920 gg.* (Saratov, 1958), p. 102.
25. The situation in Volsk and Atkarsk is discussed in SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 3, d. 4, l. 1. Revealing is the reply from the Atkarsk RC leader Tataev to a 'bilious' letter sent by local Bolsheviks who claimed to be accommodating to local RCs: op. 2, d. 8, l. 5; see also op. 3, d. 1, l. 1. Accusations that the party comprised kulaks continued well into 1920: see, for example, the 'conversation' between two

- peasants published in *Rabochii i krest'ianin* (Volsk), No. 66 (2 March 1920), p. 2.
26. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 42, ll. 1–4, and *Znamia revoliutsii*, No. 2 (30 September 1919), p. 3. For a fuller sense of the tone of the local conference see SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 42, ll. 7–8, 10–11, 19, 22–4; op. 1, d. 44, ll. 12, 17.
  27. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 52, ll. 66–70 (Novouzensk), 91–9 (Petrovsk); op. 1, d. 53, l. 12. Whereas the Volsk RC organisation expressed concern that 'kulak and White Guard' elements might penetrate party organisations, it also articulated fear of arrest owing to Bolshevik opposition to the party: see SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 70, l. 1.
  28. SOTsDNI, f. 200, op. 1, d. 90, l. 8; for other examples, see RTsKhIDNI, f. 282, op. 1, d. 46, l. 9; d. 66, ll. 5–6.
  29. See, for example, the unfolding events in Petrovsk in SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 52, ll. 91–3; op. 1, d. 50, l. 31.
  30. A representative complaint is to be found in *Znamia revoliutsii*, No. 1 (5 September 1919), p. 1.
  31. SOTsDNI, f. 27, op. 1, d. 227, l. 45.
  32. Ibid., f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 48, l. 14; RTsKhIDNI, f. 282, op. 2, d. 12, l. 21.
  33. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 2, d. 4, l. 48; f. 200, op. 1, d. 87, l. 14. The RCs at the time had issued a circular to local activists to set about forming party cells: see SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 2, d. 30, l. 35.
  34. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 2, d. 31, l. 3. Another complaint addressed to the Cheka is to be found in f. 27, op. 1, d. 635, l. 18; see also f. 151/95, op. 2, d. 32, l. 69; f. 200, op. 1, d. 204, ll. 8–9; f. 151/95, op. 2, d. 41, l. 5.
  35. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 3, d. 14, l. 12.
  36. *Izvestiia Atkarskogo Soveta*, No. 30 (10 February 1920), p. 1.
  37. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 35, ll. 1–53; op. 1, d. 102, l. 1; op. 1, d. 83, ll. 2–3; RTsKhIDNI, f. 282, op. 1, ed. khr. 46, ll. 15–15 ob. Figures for the CPSU are to be found in *Saratovskaia oblastnaia organizatsiia KPSS v tsifrakh, 1917–1975* (Saratov, 1977), pp. 16–19; see also Sagrad'ian, 'Iz istorii vozniknoveniia', p. 113. As a result of 'party week, Saratov Bolsheviks signed up more new members than any other party organisation in Russia except for Moscow. The ranks of the CPSU had swollen, but at the end of the Civil War almost a third of the members were purged. Shestak claims that 77 per cent of the membership was peasant and that most of the party's leaders were former Left SRs ('RKP[b] i partiia', p. 21). Data on the composition of the Saratov city RC organisation indicate that it would be a distortion to describe the RCs as merely an offshoot of the Left SRs: see SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 34, ll. 1–27.
  38. For defections at the local level, see GARF, f. 393, op. 3, d. 330, l. 57. Two months after Left SR renegades set up the Revolutionary Communist Party, five members of its Central Committee withdrew from the body to join the Communists, while the other left populist party formed at the time, the Popular Communists, merged with the Bolsheviks; moreover, the SR Maximalists did likewise in April 1920; defections to the Right undermined the Revolutionary Communists, too.
  39. See, for example, SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 98, ll. 4–4 ob.
  40. Sagrad'ian, 'Iz istorii vozniknoveniia', p. 121.



41. Although this proposal was voted down, it undoubtedly increased Bolshevik fears that the Revolutionary Communists might one day link up with other populists: SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 67, l. 2. Moreover, the attempt almost split the party: apparently, an effort had been made before this to take advantage of the absence of one Central Committee member to force the issue of union: see SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 47, ll. 5, 9; see also RTsKhIDNI, f. 282, op. 2, d. 3, l. 94.
42. Spirina, *Krakh melko-burzhuaanoi kontseptsii*, pp. 196–200.
43. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 102, l. 7. Nevertheless, I am struck by an attempt to revive the Volga regional party committee, first formed in 1918, which had subsequently become defunct. Representatives from Saratov, Astrakhan', Tsaritsyn, the Urals, Penza, Tambov, Simbirsk, Samara and Kazan' took part in these deliberations: see SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 3, d. 13, l. 12. Another topic that merits further investigation is the RCs' promotion of *soiuzy trudovogo krest'ianstva* (unions of working peasants) in 1920, which posed a threat to the Bolsheviks: see SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 3, d. 16, ll. 1, 8–8 ob, 12, 15. The party justified the unions by citing the Soviet Constitution: see RTsKhIDNI, f. 282, op. 1, ed. khr. 47, l. 22.
44. SOTsDNI, f. 151/95, op. 1, d. 87, l. 29; f. 200, op. 1, d. 90, l. 33.
45. The decision was certainly not to everyone's liking; moreover, it set a precedent that the other socialist parties would be compelled to follow after the Civil War was over.
46. Schapiro, *The Origins of the Communist Autocracy*, p. 181.
47. Oskar Anweiler, *The Soviets: The Russian Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Councils, 1905–1917*, translated by Ruth Hein (New York, 1974), pp. 231–2.
48. See, for example, the justification of Karaev from Volsk: he argued that merger was the only viable alternative, owing to the threat of a peasant uprising brought about by the Communists' repressive policies in the countryside: RTsKhIDNI, f. 282, op. 1, ed. khr. 47, l. 23.

# 5 A House Divided

## Civil War Politics in Siberia, 1918

Susan Z. Rupp

In comparison with 1917, the Russian Civil War has been relatively neglected, and the result is a problematic historiography which often reduces the Civil War to a struggle between Reds and Whites. Such an approach diminishes important political questions and distorts our understanding of the revolutionary period as a whole. Recent political changes and the opening of archives in the former Soviet Union, however, have invigorated interest in the politics of the revolutionary period. This brief consideration of the anti-Bolshevik opposition in Siberia prior to the Kolchak coup, based upon previously little-used collections in the United States as well as newly-opened Russian archives, may serve as a test case for the viability of the democratic opposition to the Bolsheviks.

In 1917, Siberian Regionalists found it difficult to promote their long-standing agenda of education, economic development and self-administration in competition with the national political parties, particularly those on the left. The Regionalist programme itself shifted noticeably leftwards in the months following the February Revolution, as Socialist Revolutionaries infused the movement with more radical social and economic demands. Yet tension between Regionalist reformism and the radicalism of the left would emerge with greater clarity during the course of 1917. As in Russia as a whole, attempts to reconcile liberal and socialist political forces would become increasingly difficult over time. A regional congress that convened in October<sup>1</sup> focused on the elaboration of plans for a division of powers in a future federated republic by which Siberia was to possess legislative, executive and judicial autonomy in all matters save foreign policy, the army and federal taxation.<sup>2</sup> The centre-piece of the new government in Siberia was to be a democratically elected Regional Duma to which a Council of Ministers would be responsible. This programme of administrative autonomy represented a fulfilment of the Regionalists'

goals, while the radicalisation of Siberian politics was reflected in the resolution on the land question, which asserted that 'private ownership of land in Siberia must not exist in the future'.<sup>3</sup>

An executive committee elected at the October meeting called in mid-December for an extraordinary regional congress in response to the spread of Bolshevik power. The congress declared that, until the convening of the Constituent Assembly, all authority was to be given over to the Regional Duma and a Provisional Regional Council. The Socialist Revolutionary majority pushed through a resolution excluding propertied elements from elections to the Regional Duma, which were to be open to candidates from the Popular Socialists on the right to the Bolsheviks on the left.<sup>4</sup> Such a resolution is not surprising given the political atmosphere of late 1917, but these electoral provisions and the fact that a significant number of the delegates to the extraordinary congress were representative of the soviets<sup>5</sup> would later provide ammunition to those on the right who would accuse the Socialist Revolutionaries of operating in concert with the Bolsheviks, and reflected the growing alienation between the centre and the left.

The Regional Duma officially opened in Tomsk on 21 January 1918, by which time all the major cities and towns in Siberia were under Bolshevik control. The assembly proclaimed the slogan 'Through an autonomous Siberia to the rebirth of a free Russia',<sup>6</sup> laid claim to the legacy of the February Revolution and upheld the authority of the Constituent Assembly. A volunteer army was to be created to defend both the Constituent Assembly and Siberian autonomy. The programme adopted by the Regional Duma closely resembled that of the Socialist Revolutionaries, and it is not surprising that those on the right, who had been excluded from elections to the Regional Duma, would have little sympathy for the assembly or its programme. Remarking on the resolutions adopted by the Regional Duma, G.K. Guins wrote: 'this is not a real programme, but only a political game in competition with the Bolsheviks'.<sup>7</sup>

Red Guard units soon closed down the Regional Duma and arrested several delegates;<sup>8</sup> the majority were simply escorted out of the city, released and warned not to return, indicating that the authorities in Tomsk did not feel especially threatened by the Regional Duma. Several of those delegates remaining at liberty held a series of secret meetings to decide upon a course of action. At the last of these

meetings, some twenty delegates chose a provisional government to rule until the Regional Duma and the Constituent Assembly could be reconvened. I.I. Serebrennikov, in Irkutsk at the time of these meetings, was unaware of his appointment as minister of supplies; the same was true of P.V. Vologodskii (named minister of foreign affairs and deputy to P.Ia. Derber) who, in his diary entry of 7 June wrote that he found out about his appointment only in April, and then refused it.<sup>9</sup> Having met in great secrecy and under the threat of arrest, the delegates to the Regional Duma dispersed. Several fled to the safe haven of the Russian Far East, while others went into hiding in Western Siberia.<sup>10</sup>

Over the next four months, the West Siberian Commissariat, established at these clandestine meetings, organised underground military units totalling several thousand men in a number of Siberian cities; the bulk of the funding for these forces was provided by the co-operatives.<sup>11</sup> A.N. Grishin-Almazov, who commanded the forces west of Irkutsk, travelled throughout the region with Pavel Mikhailov overseeing the organisation of the opposition forces. Whereas Mikhailov was a Socialist Revolutionary, the political fealties of Grishin-Almazov (who later became commander-in-chief and minister of war of the Provisional Siberian Government), like those of many of the men involved in the military underground, were less clear. Apparently, Grishin-Almazov had been a Socialist Revolutionary, but resigned his party membership in an effort to win over leading figures in the army who were generally hostile towards the left.<sup>12</sup> Paul Dotsenko maintains that those wishing to join the opposition forces had to recognise the authority of the Constituent Assembly and the Regional Duma and accept the principle of a democratic army;<sup>13</sup> yet these military units were bound together more by hatred of the Bolsheviks than by any shared political ideas. Officers despatched by General Alekseev to report on the situation in Siberia, on observing the fragmentation of the military underground, reported that 'up to the time of the Czechoslovak revolt in May 1918, the situation in Siberia was such that it did not give reason to hope for the possibility of overthrowing Soviet power without help from outside'.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in his report to the French representative in Peking, Major Pichon advised against supporting the opposition forces because they were so weakened by internal political divisions.<sup>15</sup>

A general uprising was planned for early June, but this was pre-empted by the outbreak of the Czechoslovak Legions' revolt. This

force of approximately 40,000 troops, assembled largely from Czech and Slovak troops held in Russian prisoner-of-war camps, was subordinated to the Czechoslovak National Council and the French military command. Designed to buttress claims to national independence after the war, the troops in Russia found themselves in an uncertain position following Bolshevik withdrawal from the war. While the Czechoslovak National Council in Russia reached agreement with Moscow in March 1918 for the transport of the Legions to Vladivostok for eventual deployment on the western front, Bolshevik authorities along the railway line often insisted upon complete disarmament of the troops in violation of the terms of the agreement, and a series of confrontations culminated in revolt in late May.<sup>16</sup> The Legions proceeded to establish contacts with various opposition groups in the east and quickly overwhelmed the less able Bolshevik forces in one city and town after another.

With the overthrow of Bolshevik rule in Tomsk on 1 June, the West Siberian Commissariat declared that 'the yoke of the new autocracy is destroyed'.<sup>17</sup> The Commissariat was led by Boris Markov, Pavel Mikhailov, Mikhail Lindberg and L. Sidorov, all of whom were Socialist Revolutionaries, but who recruited individuals on the basis of qualifications and experience rather than political allegiance. Dotsenko later claimed, as did other Socialist Revolutionaries, that such an approach compromised the new government.<sup>18</sup> Yet a congress of Socialist Revolutionaries in Siberia called for a general (*obshchenarodnyi*) front, and argued that divisions within democracy would prove fatal.<sup>19</sup> In the meantime, those ministers named by the fragments of the Regional Duma in January who had remained in Western Siberia resurfaced to claim their posts. Those such as Guins, who disliked the purely socialist composition of the Commissariat leadership, urged these ministers to claim authority as soon as possible.

While the West Siberian Commissariat pursued a coalitionist strategy in terms of personnel, its policies mirrored the Socialist Revolutionary programme. Thus, the Commissariat defined itself as a labour democracy,<sup>20</sup> and Bolshevik decrees on land and the soviets were retained.<sup>21</sup> One of the Commissariat's earliest decrees called for the denationalisation of industry, but warned against precipitous, independent action; a later decree repeated the call for denationalisation except in cases where it might cause 'cessation or decline of production

in an enterprise of exceptional state importance'.<sup>22</sup> In practice, such ambiguity allowed the West Siberian Commissariat to retain significant state control over industry. A similarly mixed form of state and private control was applied in agriculture, with the establishment of a food bureau including representatives of co-operatives, chambers of commerce, the People's Bank and local and central government to oversee production and distribution.<sup>23</sup>

Local administration was temporarily entrusted to appointed commissars who were to serve only until *zemstvos* and city *dumas* could be re-established. Government representatives were instructed 'not to act against any social class or party organisations so long as they do not evince opposition to the Provisional Siberian Government or try to obtain governmental rights for themselves'.<sup>24</sup> The new authorities were careful about their use of police powers, establishing investigative commissions (to include representatives of the various political parties and union organisations) and demanding that such commissions be informed within twenty-four hours of the detention of suspects by the military.<sup>25</sup> All these decrees clearly indicate that the West Siberian Commissariat defined itself as a revolutionary government, claiming the mantle of *narodovlastie* in its struggle against the Bolsheviks.

While deferring to the authority of the Regional Duma and the cabinet named in January, the leaders of the Commissariat were reluctant to surrender authority to the ministers present in Omsk. At the very last moment of negotiations for the transfer of power, on the evening of 30 June, the members of the Commissariat balked: they were uncertain about the political reliability of several ministers (only one of whom was a Socialist Revolutionary). When Sidorov inquired about the particulars of the new government's future programme, I.A. Mikhailov, the new minister of finance who was particularly distrusted by the left, provocatively asked whether this was just a matter of curiosity or some sort of demand on the part of the West Siberian Commissariat. Despite their reservations, the Commissariat conceded power to the new government. Sidorov later remarked that, while the West Siberian Commissariat had done a fine job in organising the military underground and overthrowing the Bolsheviks, it felt uncertain about its authority given the ill-defined scope of the Commissariat, which was designed as a subordinate body with only limited powers. The Commissariat was further worried about the absence of a functioning

representative body in Siberia, as well as the attitude of trade and industrial circles and the potential for military dictatorship.<sup>26</sup> The tensions accompanying the transfer of power from the West Siberian Commissariat to the Provisional Siberian Government, as well as the evident reluctance of the Socialist Revolutionaries to act independently of other political forces, testify to both the persistence of divisions within the opposition and uncertainties about the struggle to come.

The new government was clearly to the right of the West Siberian Commissariat. Prime Minister Vologodskii apparently retained some of his youthful Populist sympathies, and he could best be described as a moderate. However, Vologodskii had a nervous temperament and was at times prone to hysteria, and therefore he was easily manipulated by those around him. The weakness of Vologodskii's character is evident on virtually every page of his diary, as he continually complains of headache, illness and exhaustion. The more conservative Mikhailov prevailed upon Vologodskii to accept the prime ministership in late June and, along with Guins, was to exercise inordinate influence over Vologodskii in the following months; Vologodskii remarked at the time that 'I did not protest against the suggestion of Mikhailov at particular length or with particular energy'.<sup>27</sup> Without doubt, Mikhailov was the most manipulative and distrusted figure in the new government. With ties to conservative circles in Omsk, he quickly became a central figure in Siberian opposition politics.<sup>28</sup>

Patushinskii, Krutovskii and Shatilov were the most leftist of the ministers in the new government. G.B. Patushinskii, minister of justice, had made a name for himself as a defence lawyer for the Lena gold-miners in 1912. Both friends and foes praised Patushinskii's energy and intelligence while criticising his nervousness and short temper.<sup>29</sup> V.M. Krutovskii, minister of health, had been a Progressive delegate to the First Duma and provincial commissar in Krasnoyarsk under the Provisional Government.<sup>30</sup> Of the three ministers, only M.B. Shatilov was a Socialist Revolutionary, while Krutovskii and Shatilov soon withdrew from governmental affairs because of their uneasiness about the cabinet's movement towards the right. Most of the leftists named to the cabinet in late January were still in the Russian Far East, and as a result the government established in Omsk was more conservative than either the West Siberian Commissariat or the Regional Duma.

The contrast between the Provincial Siberian Government and the

West Siberian Commissariat, with its revolutionary rhetoric, became clear immediately. In its first announcement, the new government appealed to the principle of state organisation (*gosudarstvennost'*) and the re-establishment of law and order.<sup>31</sup> A decree of 4 July nullified all Soviet laws; the state monopoly and fixed prices on grain were abolished two days later. Land was to be returned to previous owners upon request, with the final disposition deferred to the Constituent Assembly.<sup>32</sup> All these policies were in sharp contrast to those adopted by the West Siberian Commissariat and signified a general retreat from developments in 1917.

By distancing itself from revolutionary politics and rhetoric, the Provisional Siberian Government hoped to secure the support of the centre and right. Trade and industrial circles in Siberia, which had been excluded from elections to the Regional Duma, believed that the government was a creature of the socialists, and thus regarded it with suspicion and distaste. A congress of trade and industry representatives, held in mid-July, excoriated the Provisional Government of 1917 as weak and indecisive, and insisted on the need for a government which would stand above party and class interests.<sup>33</sup> While recognising the new government, the delegates insisted that no additional appointees should be included in the cabinet so as to prevent 'harmful confusion in the minds of the population'. A further resolution warned against responsibility to any representative body, and the delegates declined the invitation to elect representatives to the Regional Duma.<sup>34</sup> Resolutions demanding the complete denationalisation of land and industry and a return to pre-revolutionary practices in factory management went well beyond the measures undertaken by the government.<sup>35</sup> Finally, the delegates insisted on the political organisation of their class independent of both the Regional Duma and the government, proposing the creation of trade and industry chambers to promote the group's interests in the future formulation of government policy. In the past, it was asserted, trade and industrial circles had been the passive victims of socialist experimentation. Now it was necessary to gather their forces because 'this class – the fundamental builder of state life – may again be prevented by the force of harmful political tendencies from fulfilling the duty that lies upon it and be constrained to remain in the position of a helpless observer of continuing events'.<sup>36</sup>

The Constitutional Democrats (Kadets) in Siberia sought to provide



a political voice for such conservative sentiments. The Kadets had been a relatively weak political force in Siberia because of the appeal of Regionalism to those who traditionally supported the Kadets in European Russia. Kadet influence, however, grew in the course of 1917 and 1918 as a result of the increasing fear of socialism on the part of the propertied classes and of the influx of refugees sympathetic towards the Kadets. V.A. Zhardetskii, the rightist leader of the Siberian Kadets, called for a one-man dictatorship and clearly evoked the context of 1917:

the time of myths and illusions is over ... It is essential that a strong, one-man dictatorship be introduced ... Authority must not be under the control of any sort of deputies. No barristers of the Kerensky type, no literati of the Chernov type should be in power.<sup>37</sup>

Like the delegates to the trade and industry congress, Zhardetskii opposed giving government responsibility to a representative body: 'They should be responsible before their conscience, reason and history, and not to anyone else'.<sup>38</sup> He went on to describe the Provisional Siberian Government as an alien, socialist body, and yet argued for recognition of its authority – at least for the time being. The Kadets did not participate in either local or central government in any significant way until after the Kolchak coup, acting instead as critics on the right.

The army also represented a powerful force on the right. Tension between the military and civilian authorities was demonstrated by the conflict over Grishin-Almazov, who was removed after an embarrassing incident at a banquet in Ekaterinburg in September, when in the presence of the Allied consuls he asserted that the Entente powers needed the Russians more than the Russian opposition needed the Entente. The government was deeply divided over Grishin-Almazov's dismissal, which was agreed to only after Vologodskii threatened to resign himself.<sup>39</sup> On the following night, Guins and Mikhailov met Grishin-Almazov and raised the possibility of an armed coup; uncertain about the support of the army, Grishin-Almazov demurred.<sup>40</sup> Grishin-Almazov's removal, however, did little to improve the relationship between the government and the military, as his successor, the Cossack P.P. Ivanov-Rinov, was even further to the right than Grishin-Almazov had been. He quickly moved to restore the traditional order in the

army, including the highly symbolic reintroduction of epaulettes. The ousting of Grishin-Almazov clearly reflects the government's difficulties in controlling its own military, and also provides a sense of the divisions and machinations taking place within the government itself.

The policies of the Provisional Siberian Government failed to secure the support of the right and at the same time alienated the popular classes, particularly workers. Government intentions towards labour were demonstrated as early as 21 June, when Guins informed the Tomsk provincial commissar that workers' control was to be replaced by state control in all enterprises.<sup>41</sup> The soviets were abolished and provisions regarding the right to strike, the eight-hour working day and the minimum wage were narrowed. Vologodskii, in a speech to the Regional Duma in August, spoke of 'free competition, healthy social policy and good finances'. He was highly critical of union interference in factory management and warned that the workers' movement 'sometimes takes on the form of unacceptable excesses'.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, he spoke favourably of more moderate organisations such as labour exchanges, conciliation boards and mutual aid societies. Workers were to be free to organise 'within the framework of the clearly defined interests of the workers' economic and cultural well-being'. Vologodskii's cautionary message reflected the government's attempt to reverse many of the gains made by workers in the revolutionary period and was certain to encourage worker suspicion if not outright hostility.

Union conferences in June and July<sup>43</sup> indicate that the government was willing to countenance at least some degree of worker activity. These conferences passed resolutions offering conditional support to the government, but when workers came to believe that the government had violated the principle of *narodovlastie* and revolutionary gains, their support began to dissipate. A total of sixteen strikes took place in July and August, many of them among the radical miners of the Kuznets Basin.<sup>44</sup> A general strike of Novonikolaevsk workers occurred in August, and isolated rail-workers' strikes culminated in a general strike in October. Strikes came to be forcibly suppressed by army units, thereby further alienating workers.

One could argue, however, that the response of the relatively small Siberian working class was less important than that of the peasants. In a survey conducted by a regional newspaper just weeks before the

overthrow of the Bolsheviks, more than a quarter of peasants failed to express any attitude towards the Soviet government; the statements of those who offered an opinion were often very general and ambivalent: 'The village does not care who rules, just so long as there is justice', and 'just so they give us plenty of land, and less taxes, and as for the parties, we can't see any difference'.<sup>45</sup> Peasant attitudes, determined by personal interest and rarely extending beyond the confines of the village, changed little with the establishment of an opposition government. Reports from representatives of the ministry of internal affairs in early August stated that seventeen of the 36 *volosts* in Novonikolaevsk province supported the government (most often conditionally), another thirteen were passive, and the remaining six could be considered hostile.<sup>46</sup> Soviet historians traditionally described the isolated peasant disturbances which broke out in the summer and autumn of 1918 as antecedents to the large-scale partisan resistance which developed during the Kolchak period.<sup>47</sup> Such an argument exaggerates the significance of early peasant disturbances which represented opposition to specific policies – attempts to conscript villagers and collect taxes – rather than a rejection of the government itself. Expressions of discontent were spontaneous and restricted to individual villages and districts; it was only in the spring of 1919 that the peasants began to act with any significant organisation or consistency.

In an attempt to build popular support, the government agreed to the reconvening of the Regional Duma. This decision, however, was characterised by continuing disagreement. Guins argued for a five- to six-month delay in the convening of the Regional Duma in order to provide for the holding of new elections; Shatilov walked out after asserting that Guins was exceeding the cabinet's authority in trying to restrict the representative body to which the government itself was responsible.<sup>48</sup> Regionalist members of the Duma fully endorsed the new government and G.N. Potanin vilified the Socialist Revolutionaries as a political force alien to Siberia.<sup>49</sup> A delegation from the Regional Duma led by the Socialist Revolutionary M.A. Krol' met members of the cabinet, urging them to join with the forces of democracy and the people and relocate to Tomsk, the site of the Regional Duma. While Krol' later asserted that these meetings ended with expressions of mutual confidence between the government and the Regional Duma, he also confesses that he left Omsk with a heavy heart.<sup>50</sup>

The entire cabinet attended the opening on 15 August of the Regional Duma, save Grishin-Almazov, who arrived with a heavily armed contingent two or three days later.<sup>51</sup> Approximately half of the 97 delegates to the Regional Duma were Socialist Revolutionaries, another eight were Mensheviks;<sup>52</sup> the number of Regionalist delegates is unclear, with later estimates ranging from four to twenty-eight.<sup>53</sup> Mel'gunov maintains that, although they were in the minority, the Regionalists had disproportionate influence in the Regional Duma because of their ties to the military.<sup>54</sup> Although the Regionalists certainly would have been more likely to enjoy the sympathies of the army than would the Socialist Revolutionaries, there is no evidence to substantiate his claim. Krol' goes even further than Mel'gunov does, arguing that the Regionalists promoted the idea of a military dictatorship and that 'only the socialist parties remained true to the idea of democracy, all the remaining liberal and even radical elements quickly veered to the right'.<sup>55</sup>

Despite – or because of – such tensions, the Socialist Revolutionary delegates were at pains to present themselves as moderates who wanted to co-operate with the government. In his address to the Regional Duma, E.E. Kolosov asserted that the Socialist Revolutionaries were 'state-minded' men (*gosudarstvenniki*) and that those who claimed that the party was opposed to governmental authority were underhanded slanderers. As had been the case with the West Siberian Commissariat, the Socialist Revolutionaries sought to overcome divisions within the opposition and espoused self-restraint and legal activity. At the same time, Kolosov asserted that national and popular interests were coincident, and added that 'We won't say that we're prepared to support the Provisional Government in everything, we won't assure anyone that we're happy with everything it does'.<sup>56</sup>

According to the terms of its agreement with the government, the Regional Duma was supposed to restrict itself to preparations for the election of representatives of the propertied elements. Moreover, Vologodskii was supposed to deliver the opening address to the Regional Duma, thereby asserting the primacy of the government in Omsk. Instead, several delegates, by either mischance or machination, opened the session with an appeal for closer ties with the Socialist Revolutionary government in Samara. When Vologodskii got the chance to speak, he asserted that the government's authority emanated

not only from the Regional Duma but 'from existing circumstances and the unanimous recognition of the Government by all circles of the population and social organisations'.<sup>57</sup> The government was thus described as possessing authority independent of the Regional Duma; Vologodskii added that Siberia was not yet ready for a parliamentary form of government given prevailing 'conditions of popular darkness, of complete illiteracy'.<sup>58</sup> Clearly, the reconvening of the Regional Duma exacerbated rather than assuaged tensions within the opposition. In the weeks that followed, the government continued to move towards the right. On 24 August, the Administrative Council was established, described as a non-party body whose sole purpose was the expediting of government business when the full cabinet was not present in Omsk. It is clear, however, that this decree represented both a narrowing and a rightward shift in the government. The Administrative Council was invested with the authority to approve all dismissals and appointments (a power acquired after it protested at Grishin-Almazov's dismissal). An addendum to the decree establishing the Administrative Council, issued on 7 September, expanded its competence to supervision of the regular activities of all ministries. The government's rightward drift is reflected in a decree applying the death penalty to cases of military desertion and insubordination, and also transferring a wide range of criminal offences to military tribunals.<sup>59</sup> On the following day, the Administrative Council asserted its authority in the absence of a majority of the cabinet to dissolve the Regional Duma if deemed necessary.<sup>60</sup>

The divisions which marked the opposition in Siberia were replicated in the relationship between the Provisional Siberian Government and its major rival for power in the liberated territories east of the Volga, the Komuch government. Despite efforts at co-operation with the Mensheviks and Kadets, the government in Samara was dominated by the Socialist Revolutionaries, who had made the reconvening of the Constituent Assembly the central slogan in its conception of *narodovlastie*. Like the West Siberian Commissariat, the Komuch government upheld the Socialist Revolutionary slogan of the 'third path' by which the gains made by the labouring masses during 1917 would be preserved while a struggle against both the Bolsheviks and the forces of reaction was waged. Decrees to preserve workers' organisations and the soviets, the limited denationalisation of industry and a reaffirmation

of the end to private ownership of land bear a strong similarity to those adopted by the West Siberian Commissariat and subsequently abandoned by the Provisional Siberian Government.<sup>61</sup>

The military situation provided the earliest source of conflict between Samara and Omsk. While the Komuch government had to establish and simultaneously deploy its forces at the front, the Provisional Siberian Government had the luxury of assembling its army safely in the rear. The two governments also clashed over authority in the Urals. Samara claimed control over the Urals by arguing that as the successor to the Constituent Assembly it represented the sole legitimate All-Russia government; the Provisional Siberian Government based its claim on long-standing economic ties between the two regions, and asserted that these districts had expressed a preference to be administered by Omsk. Having balked at co-ordinating their activities in both military and civilian matters, the two governments essentially came to treat each other as foreign powers. The representative from Omsk was barred from attending meetings of the Komuch government, while the Komuch representative to Siberia and its department of Siberian affairs (led by Markov, formerly of the West Siberian Commissariat) chose to associate with the Regional Duma rather than the government in Omsk.<sup>62</sup> Given the uneasy relationship between the government and the Duma, the Komuch government's preference for working with the latter could not have been seen by Omsk as anything other than a slap in the face.

The impetus for negotiations between the two governments came from without, from representatives of the Entente, the Czechoslovak Legions, and the Union of Regeneration. Entente policy towards Russia fluctuated considerably during the course of the Civil War and there was little co-ordination between the Allies. Yet all agreed, however, that a unified government was necessary to mount an effective challenge to the Bolsheviks and to serve as a basis for Russia's future political order. The Czechoslovak Legions, having borne the brunt of fighting in the east, were angry and frustrated that political divisions prevented the opposition from contributing more effectively to the struggle against the Bolsheviks. Although their sympathies generally lay with the Socialist Revolutionaries, the Legions were concerned above all about the protection of their own troops and supported the creation of a unified opposition government to that end.

The leaders of the various parties represented in the Union of Regeneration, from the Socialist Revolutionaries on the left to the Kadets on the right, were either undecided about or hostile towards the idea of perpetuating a coalition which many believed had paved the way for the Bolshevik seizure of power. At the same time, there were individuals within these parties who believed that the Bolsheviks could be defeated only by means of a coalition which would stand above the sectarian politics that had crippled the democratic forces in 1917. Several of the Union's representatives sent to the east, including the Kadet L.A. Krol'<sup>63</sup> and the Socialist Revolutionaries A.A. Argunov and V.E. Pavlov,<sup>64</sup> would also claim to speak as representatives of the central leadership of their parties, undoubtedly without the knowledge or consent of the explicitly non-party Union. Others, such as N.D. Avksent'ev and V.M. Zenzinov, who had come to the region as representatives of the Socialist Revolutionary Central Committee, acted instead as proponents of the Union's programme, and subsequently played a central role in the creation of a coalition government.

The first conference of the opposition forces in the east was held in Cheliabinsk on 15–16 July. In describing the attitude of the Komuch and Provisional Siberian Governments, Argunov wrote that 'both sides came to the meeting with a feeling of enmity and distrust which did not leave them for a minute'.<sup>65</sup> The delegates from Samara and Omsk were loath to meet at all, refusing to be photographed together and often limiting their contacts to an exchange of notes between the railway carriages that housed their delegations. The Komuch delegation tenaciously held to the position that all liberated territories should be subordinated to the government in Samara; they did allow, however, that other governments in the region could exercise limited autonomy in accordance with the federal principle.<sup>66</sup> The Omsk delegation maintained that it represented the sole legitimate government in Siberia and could not cede this authority to any other government; moreover, they disingenuously claimed that they had been led to believe that the conference was intended only for an exchange of information and that they had not been empowered to conclude any binding agreements on behalf of their government.<sup>67</sup> M.Ia. Gendel'man, a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Central Committee and an advocate of coalition, vainly asserted that those who 'pointed to the irreconcilable relations that exist between the Siberian Government and the

Committee [Komuch] in the light of the differences in the positions of principle which they occupy' were mistaken.<sup>68</sup> A second conference at Cheliabinsk, held on 20–25 August, was marked by continuing dissension, with angry disagreement over the site of the state conference degenerating into a vituperative exchange between Gendel'man and the right Kadet V.N. Pepeliaev.<sup>69</sup>

A participant in the Cheliabinsk assemblies expressed little hope that the Ufa State Conference would be any more successful, stating that 'one can assert with certainty that it too will end without results and may even lead to a formal break'.<sup>70</sup> The antipathies dividing the opposition were still clearly in evidence at the opening of the conference on 8 September. While Avksent'ev opened the conference with a solemn reminder that the delegates bore responsibility for 'saving our fatherland',<sup>71</sup> the Omsk delegation had not even left for Ufa. Avksent'ev contacted Mikhailov soon after the opening of the conference, asking when the delegation for the Provisional Siberian Government would arrive. Mikhailov explained that the delegation's departure had been delayed by a 'serious political crisis'; a clearly exasperated Avksent'ev dismissed this apparent reference to the ousting of Grishin-Almazov as of little importance compared with the conference's mission. Once they did arrive in Ufa, the Omsk delegation chose to remain in its official railway carriage, thus further isolating themselves from the other conference participants.<sup>72</sup>

As was noted above with respect to the conferences in Cheliabinsk, the Provisional Siberian Government was hesitant to co-operate with Komuch, and events in the intervening weeks could only have increased this reluctance. Just days before the conference opened in Ufa, Vologodskii had left Omsk for negotiations with opposition governments and Entente representatives in the Russian Far East. The timing of this mission and its subsequent success indicate that Omsk did not foresee surrendering its authority in the immediate future.<sup>73</sup> An optimistic Vologodskii sent instructions to the delegation at Ufa not to rush into any agreement which might unfavourably affect the government's interests.

Soviet historians generally described the Ufa State Conference in terms of a division between the adherents of popular sovereignty and military dictatorship, but such a description is over-simplified and obscures a more essential conflict. The greatest source of contention at



the conference was neither the government in the immediate future nor elevated political principle. Instead, as Avksent'ev later wrote in a letter to the Socialist Revolutionary Central Committee, what divided the Ufa State Conference 'wasn't the programme of the government or its form, and not even the composition of the Directory, but the issue of the Constituent Assembly'.<sup>74</sup> The various proposals for the future All-Russia government presented to plenary sessions on 10 and 12 September reflect a fundamental bifurcation on the issue of the Constituent Assembly. In the opening session, M.K. Vol'skii, a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Central Committee and chairman of the Komuch government, argued that the only legitimate government in Russia would be one based on popular sovereignty, which he defined as synonymous with the Constituent Assembly. This statement was met with 'stormy and prolonged applause'<sup>75</sup> from the various Muslim delegations, the Socialist Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, and the Congress of Cities and Zemstvos. V.V. Sapozhnikov,<sup>76</sup> in presenting the Provisional Siberian Government's position, called for a strong government 'responsible only before a future fully authoritative organ correctly expressing the popular will',<sup>77</sup> thereby implicitly rejecting the Constituent Assembly. This position was supported by the Cossack delegations, the *Edinstvo* group and the Kadets.

Attitudes towards the Constituent Assembly reflected how various political groups had been affected by the events of 1917 and how they had interpreted these events. In the pre-revolutionary period, the Constituent Assembly had been a central goal of all those political forces in Russia which had worked towards limiting the tsarist autocracy and securing the exercise of popular sovereignty. The attainment of this goal, however, ultimately proved empty, as the Bolsheviks dispersed the Constituent Assembly without any significant resistance. For the democratic forces in Russia, the complete collapse of such an essential symbol as the Constituent Assembly provoked a profound questioning of earlier beliefs. The Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks clung to their faith in the revolution and the masses in spite of the apparent disappointments of 1917, while the Kadets and others on the centre and right became distrustful of the masses and disillusioned of their earlier faith in the possibilities of democracy in Russia. Thus, by the end of 1918 the Constituent Assembly had taken on a new discursive reality, that of saviour or pariah.

The eventual compromise reached at Ufa was the work of a negotiating commission which agreed that the future Russian state should be a federated one and that a directory would be the most appropriate form of government for the struggle with the Bolsheviks. There was surprisingly little dissension over policy matters, with the sole exception of the land question, which from the early months of 1917 had taken on great symbolic significance in dividing Russia's political parties.<sup>78</sup> In contrast to fairly ready agreement on the form of government and its programme, the issue of the Constituent Assembly gave rise to protracted and bitter debate. The Socialist Revolutionary members of the negotiating commission, Gendel'man and Zenzinov, faced the opposition of the Kadet Krol' and the representatives of the Provisional Siberian Government, and were compelled to make a series of concessions. At one point in the negotiations, Serebrennikov conceded that the Constituent Assembly should be allowed to convene, but only to prepare for new elections and then dissolve itself. When pressed by Gendel'man about what the response would be if the assembly did not do so, Serebrennikov replied that 'without deciding the question in advance, I would suggest that the Siberian government would retain freedom of action for itself'.<sup>79</sup> The final compromise allowed for the convening of the Constituent Assembly on 1 January with a quorum of 250 delegates, or on 1 February with a quorum of 170.<sup>80</sup>

The compromise on the Constituent Assembly was a clear defeat for the Socialist Revolutionaries. The party had long upheld the Constituent Assembly as the sole legitimate authority in Russia, and their opposition to the Bolsheviks had been portrayed as a struggle to restore this authority. The terms set for the reconvening of the Constituent Assembly made recognition virtually meaningless. Approximately one hundred Constituent Assembly delegates were present in the Volga region at the opening of the Ufa State Conference; it was unlikely that another 150 would arrive within the next three months, especially as the Bolsheviks were beginning to advance on the front and were increasing repression of opposition parties in Bolshevik-held territories. Moreover, the power which the Constituent Assembly would exercise even if convened is very uncertain; it was unlikely that the newly-created government would willingly surrender the unrestricted powers that it would enjoy in the intervening months.

Part of the explanation for the defeat of the Socialist Revolutionaries

lies within the party itself. Since at least the October Revolution, the party had been divided between those who argued for coalition and those who insisted that the Bolsheviks could be defeated only by renouncing the principle of coalition and fighting alone under the banner of *narodovlastie*. The party leadership shifted towards the latter position by the end of 1917 and yet, as seen in the case of both the West Siberian Commissariat and the Komuch government, many party members continued to support the idea of co-operation with the right. It should be recognised, however, that the defeat of the Socialist Revolutionaries was equally the result of external circumstances. As the conference proceeded, Komuch authority and prestige (and thus that of the Socialist Revolutionaries) were being severely undermined by military reverses in the very heart of Komuch territory.

Like Komuch, the Provisional Siberian Government found itself compelled to accept a compromise at Ufa. The Omsk delegation abandoned its essentially inflexible stance only in the last days of the conference, as the long-simmering conflict with the Regional Duma reached boiling-point. The troubled relationship between the government and the Regional Duma worsened in early September. In an effort to assert its influence, the Regional Duma sent its own delegations to both the Russian Far East and the Ufa State Conference; the delegation sent eastwards was forcibly detained by the authorities in Irkutsk, while that sent to Ufa was denied official representation. With most members of the cabinet absent from Omsk, the Regional Duma saw a final opportunity to assert its authority. Shatilov and Krutovskii, the leftist ministers who had earlier resigned their cabinet posts, now returned to Omsk.<sup>81</sup> They were accompanied by I.A. Iakushev, the chairman of the Regional Duma, and A.E. Novoselov, who had been appointed to the cabinet in the clandestine meetings of late January, but was only now returning to Western Siberia. Upon arriving in Omsk, the men met the Administrative Council and declared their intention to take up their cabinet posts.

The Administrative Council, led by Mikhailov in Serebrennikov's absence, ordered the suspension of the Regional Duma, and Krutovskii, Shatilov, Novoselov and Iakushev were arrested late that night. The leftist ministers were forced at gunpoint to renounce all claims to their posts and leave the city immediately; Krutovskii was told that he had 'three minutes to sign, or you'll be put in a car and shot'.<sup>82</sup> Early

the next day, Novoselov was murdered on the outskirts of the city. A.S. Stepanov, who commanded the soldiers responsible for the murder, maintained that Mikhailov ordered both the arrests and the killing of Novoselov.<sup>83</sup> Mikhailov was at pains to assert that Colonel V.I. Volkov, the commander of the Omsk garrison and Stepanov's superior, acted without the approval of the cabinet; Mikhailov also added that he was sick in bed that night.<sup>84</sup> However, there must have been some level of government complicity in the arrests, since materials which implicated Novoselov in the Bolshevik seizure of power in Akmolinsk province in 1917 had been prepared beforehand and were presented to the Omsk district court prosecutor on the day after the murder.<sup>85</sup>

After the arrests in Omsk, Mikhailov contacted A.N. Gattenberger, the provincial governor of Tomsk, and instructed him 'to take the most decisive measures demanded by the situation. I will hold you responsible in case of delay or indecisiveness.' On the evening of 23 September, the Tomsk militia broke up a meeting of the Regional Duma and arrested several delegates.<sup>86</sup> Those delegates remaining at liberty met on the following day, called for the government to be relocated to Tomsk, and demanded that Mikhailov, A.A. Gratsianov (vice-minister of internal affairs) and Gattenberger be dismissed from their posts and tried for their actions against the Regional Duma. In the meantime, all authority was to be vested in the Duma Committee headed by Pavel Mikhailov, one of the former leaders of the West Siberian Commissariat. That day, Gratsianov and Volkov were arrested by Legion troops acting on the orders of the Czechoslovak National Council's representative to the Regional Duma; the troops also had orders to arrest Mikhailov, but could not locate him.<sup>87</sup> The government then escalated the conflict by arresting the Duma Committee. The arrested delegates were detained for several days despite orders from the Directory for their release; Gattenberger released the detainees only on the orders of the Administrative Council.<sup>88</sup>

The events of late September signalled the political demise of the Regional Duma, as the attempt to reassert its authority in Siberia had ended in dismal failure. Delegates meeting on 28 September voted in favour of recognising the Directory even though they were critical of the newly created government's call for the Regional Duma's restraint in dealings with Omsk. On 2 October, the Regional Duma called upon

the Directory to set a date within two weeks for the reconvening of the Regional Duma, and reiterated its demand for the resignation and trial of Mikhailov and Gratsianov and the reinstatement of the leftist ministers. The impotence of the Regional Duma is reflected in the fact that none of these demands was met. The Second Siberian Congress of Socialist Revolutionaries asserted that only the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Social Democrats represented democracy in Russia, and warned that 'the revolution hasn't died yet but is in a seriously depressed condition'.<sup>89</sup> M.P. Golovachev, assistant minister of foreign affairs, later wrote of the events of late September that 'with this conflict, the idea of democracy in Siberia perished'.<sup>90</sup>

In a telegram of 25 September to the government in Omsk, the Directory indicated its flexibility on the issue of the Regional Duma; while respecting the rights of this assembly, the Directory proposed, 'having in mind the impossibility of normal activity by the Regional Duma in the present circumstances, to postpone its activities until the creation of appropriate circumstances'.<sup>91</sup> The authorities in Omsk were intransigent in their position with respect to the Regional Duma, refusing to allow it to reconvene and asserting that this was a matter to be decided without the Directory. The Regional Duma was permitted to convene on 10 November, with the Directory's Avksent'ev in attendance, at which time all but one of the delegates either voted in favour of dissolution or abstained.<sup>92</sup>

The fate of the Directory presents a further, fatal defeat to the democratic alternative in the east. Anxious about Ufa's proximity to the front, the Directory relocated to Omsk soon after the close of the conference in spite of the protestations of the Socialist Revolutionaries.<sup>93</sup> The new left-centre majority among Central Committee members in the east, led by V.M. Chernov, had argued against coalition since the end of 1917; now they feared that, in moving to Omsk, the Directory would become a captive of the right. An internal party circular issued in late October, which came to be called the Chernov Manifesto, expressed the party's support for the Directory, but went on to state that 'the central focus of their tactics should be gathering together democratic forces and attaching them to the Constituent Assembly and its successor – the Congress of the Delegates to the Constituent Assembly'.<sup>94</sup> The circular also called for the creation of an independent armed force to protect the Constituent Assembly against potential threats from

the right. The concerns of the Socialist Revolutionaries soon proved to be well founded.

In the weeks that followed, the members of the Directory, living and working in railway carriages on the outskirts of Omsk, engaged in tense and protracted negotiations with the Provisional Siberian Government. With control over the administrative apparatus and the military, Omsk had a commanding position in these talks, insisting on the closing of the Regional Duma, the retention of all previously enacted legislation, control over the ministries of finance and supplies, and final approval of all cabinet appointments. These conditions were tantamount to the subordination of the Directory to a government which was ostensibly subject to the Directory and slated for liquidation. The balance of power between the two governments is reflected in Mikhailov's statement at the first meeting with the Directory on 12 October: 'If they intend to dictate to the Siberian government, then there is no reason to gather here, for to dictate to the Siberian government is a completely hopeless matter'.<sup>95</sup> Just two weeks after declaring its authority over the liberated territories in the east on 4 November, the Directory was overthrown in a military coup d'état and Admiral Kolchak was installed as Supreme Commander; few on either the right or the left within the opposition mourned its passing. With the end of the Directory, the last chance for a democratic alternative to Bolshevik rule in the east had been lost, defeated by divisions among the very forces which supported such an alternative.

The anti-Bolshevik opposition in Siberia at the time of Kolchak's coup was as divided as it had been a year earlier. The Socialist Revolutionaries, who dominated the Regional Duma and led the initial military and political opposition to the Bolsheviks with the West Siberian Commissariat, were unable to maintain control over an increasingly conservative government. In remarking on tensions between the right and the left, one Socialist Revolutionary stated that 'all these various elements, until then acting in a friendly fashion, parted ways, and most importantly, those elements who had not acted at all, but had built up enmity and thirst for revenge sitting in a corner, now came forward'.<sup>96</sup> The Provisional Siberian Government looked to the propertied elements and military circles for support, but these groups distrusted the government and called for the establishment of a military dictatorship. The popular classes were either hostile towards the government, as was

the case with the working class, or were passive and essentially apolitical, as were the peasants. The Siberian case is representative of the problems faced by the democratic opposition to the Bolsheviks more generally, as the impotence of a fragmented centre rendered the Russian Civil War a struggle between political extremes.

## Notes

1. Eighty-seven of the 169–200 delegates were Socialist Revolutionaries and their allies, while another twenty-five supported the Social Democrats: V. Maksakov and A. Turunov, *Khronika grazhdanskoi voiny v Sibiri (1917–1918)* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1926), pp. 119–20; only four Kadets and a handful of Regionalists were represented.
2. *Pervyi sibirskii oblastnoi s'ezd: postanovleniia s'ezda* (Tomsk, 1917), pp. 1–3.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
4. *Kak vznikla Vremennaia Oblastnaia Sibirskaiia Duma i Vremennoe Pravitel'stvo Avtonomnoi Sibiri* (Informatsionnyi otdel Vremennago Pravitel'stva Avtonomnoi Sibiri, 1918), p. 6.
5. G.K. Guins, in *Sibir', soiuzniki i Kolchak* (Peking, 1921), p. 71, states that almost half the delegates were soviet representatives, while Maksakov and Turunov, in *Khronika grazhdanskoi voiny*, p. 121, maintain that only 34 of the 155 delegates represented the soviets.
6. 'Pamiatnaia data', *Vol'naia Sibir'*, 1928, No. 3, p. 5.
7. Declaration of the Siberian Regional Duma (marginalia), G.K. Guins Papers, Hoover Archive.
8. Paul Dotsenko, *The Struggle for a Democracy in Siberia, 1917–1920* (Stanford, CA, 1983), p. 22.
9. Vologodskii diary, entry for 7 June 1918, Hoover Archive. In fact, only six of the fourteen cabinet appointees were present at the Tomsk meetings: Guins, *Sibir' soiuzniki i Kolchak*, p. 77.
10. Derber, along with a handful of others, fled to Kharbin and took up residence in a railway car furnished by General Khorvat, the director of the Chinese–Eastern Railway, and relocated to Vladivostok just prior to the city's liberation by the Czechoslovak Legions. The Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia declared its authority on 29 June with the backing of the city дума and the regional *zemstvo*. This ephemeral government would later seek to assert its authority over the Provisional Siberian Government as well as the government proclaimed by General Khorvat. A mission led by Vologodskii arrived in Vladivostok on 20 September, at which time the Derber group renounced any claims to power. Sources on the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia include the following: 'Vremennoe Pravitel'stvo Avtonomnoi Sibiri', *Krasnyi arkhiv*, 1928, No. 4 (29); *Kak vznikla Vremennaia oblastnaia sibirskaiia дума*, op. cit.; S.G. Livshits, 'Krakh "Vremennogo Pravitel'stva Avtonomnoi Sibiri"',

- Voprosy istorii*, 1974, No. 8; *Vestnik Vremennogo Pravitel'stva Avtonomnoi Sibiri*.
11. The January 1918 congress of co-operatives, at which 75 of the 88 delegates were Socialist Revolutionaries, promised a series of loans to the Regional Duma: P. Lisovskii, *Na sluzhbe kapitala: Esero-men'shevistskaia kontrrevoliutsiia* (Leningrad, 1928), p. 54; V. Maksakov and A. Turunov, *Khronika grazhdanskoi voiny v Sibiri, 1918–1920* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1926), p. 149. Although the promised sums were never provided in full, some 200,000 roubles were extended by co-operatives to the West Siberian Commissariat prior to the overthrow of the Bolsheviks.
  12. General Denikin, who met Grishin-Almazov in late 1918 after the latter joined the Volunteer Army, provides the following description of the man: 'Young, energetic, self-assured, somewhat arrogant, a liberal – perhaps more of a politician than a soldier, with great ambition and a touch of adventurism': A.I. Denikin, *Ocherki russkoi smuty* (Berlin, 1924), Vol. 3, p. 102.
  13. Dotsenko, *The Struggle for a Democracy in Siberia*, p. 36. A decree of the West Siberian Commissariat dated 25 June 1918 referred to volunteers' 'sincere readiness to serve the idea of *narodovlastie* faithfully': GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 37, l. 2.
  14. 'Otchet o komandirovke iz Dobrovol'cheskoi Armii v Sibir' v 1918 godu', *Arkhiv russkoi revoliutsii*, 1923, No. 9, p. 271.
  15. Pichon (Jules Chopin), *Soiuznicheskaiia interventsii na Dal'nem Vostoke i v Sibiri* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1925), p. 48.
  16. The decision to revolt, which ran counter to orders from both the Czechoslovak National Council in Russia and the French military command, was made by a congress of Legion delegates which assembled in Cheliabinsk in late May. The Legions played a central role in the Civil War in the east until the Kolchak coup, at which time they adopted an essentially defensive posture. Useful studies of the role of the Czechoslovak Legions include Edward Beneš, *Souvenirs de guerre et de révolution* (Paris, 1928); J.F.N. Bradley, *Le Légion tchécoslovaque en Russie, 1914–1920* (Paris, 1965); Betty Miller Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia, and the Rise of Czechoslovakia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1989).
  17. GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 37, l. 13.
  18. 'The state apparatus thus came to be bogged down with technicians who, far from sharing the principles of democracy, were often downright hostile to the idea of democratic power': Dotsenko, *The Struggle for a Democracy in Siberia*, p. 37.
  19. GARF, f. 1805, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 1–2.
  20. GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 37, l. 12.
  21. K.V. Gusev, *Partiia Eserov* (Moscow, 1975), p. 286. Soviet decrees were to be retained if they 'proved to be vital': GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 2, l. 2.
  22. *Sobranie postanovlenii i rasporiashenii Zapadno-Sibirskogo Komissariata Sibirskogo Vremennogo Pravitel'stva*, 28 June, p. 5, and 30 June, p. 4. Russia. Posol'stvo (France), box 27. Hoover Archive. In the interim, all property that had been controlled by the Sovnarkhoz was temporarily placed under the control of the People's Industrial Committee (*Narodno-promyshlennyi komitet*): GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 6, l. 177.
  23. *Ibid.*, 28 June, p. 8.



24. GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 10, l. 15. At the same time, Grishin-Almazov and Guins were issuing instructions to treat the Bolsheviks as prisoners-of-war rather than political opponents: GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 6, ll. 229 and 247.
25. GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 7, l. 153.
26. Ibid., ll. 168–77.
27. Vologodskii diary, entry for 29 June 1918. Hoover Archive.
28. Born in 1890 in a Siberian camp to which his well-known father, a member of the People's Will, had been exiled, he attended gymnasium in Chita before studying financial law at St. Petersburg University. He worked under A.I. Shingarev at the ministry of agriculture in 1917 and returned to Omsk after the October Revolution: A.S. Soloveichik, *Bor'ba za vozrozhdenie Rossii na Vostoke* (Rostov, 1919), pp. 21–3.
29. I.I. Serebrennikov, *Moi vospominaniia* (Tientsin, 1937), p. 129, and Vologodskii diary, entry for 7 June 1918. Hoover Archive.
30. Guins, *Sibir', soiuzniki i Kolchak*, p. 106.
31. *Sobranie postanovlenii i rasporiashenii Vremennogo Sibirskogo Pravitel'stva*, 5 July, pp. 1–2. Russia. Posol'stvo (France), box 27. Hoover Archive.
32. Ibid., 5 July, p. 7, and 26 July, p. 5.
33. Congress Resolutions, pp. 2–3. Vologodskii Papers. Hoover Archive.
34. Ibid., pp. 6–7.
35. Industrial Section of the 1st Siberian Trade-Industrial Congress, pp. 3–4. Vologodskii Papers. Hoover Archive.
36. Resolution of Organisational Section of the Congress, p. 7. Vologodskii Papers. Hoover Archive.
37. Quoted in A.N. Reznichenko, *Bor'ba bol'shevikov protiv 'demokraticeskoi' kontrrevoliutsii v Sibiri 1918 g.* (Novosibirsk, 1972), p. 91. The All-Siberian Kadet Conference held in August adopted a resolution supporting the establishment of a one-man dictatorship: Maksakov and Turunov, *Khronika grazhdanskoi voiny v Sibiri (1918–1920)*, p. 83.
38. Maksakov and Turunov, *Khronika grazhdanskoi voiny v Sibiri (1918–1920)*, pp. 207–8.
39. Vologodskii diary, entry for 4 September 1918. Hoover Archive.
40. The relationship between Mikhailov and Grishin-Almazov is obscure, particularly as Vologodskii in his diary entry for 30 July writes that Mikhailov warned him that Grishin-Almazov was planning a coup; Vologodskii dismissed the warning as a reflection of the fact that Mikhailov was exhausted and overworked. Moreover, it was rumoured that Grishin-Almazov's wife, a *chanteuse* from Khabarovsk given to *décolleté* silk dresses and drink, who hosted the conservative salon in Omsk, was romantically involved with Mikhailov: I.S. Il'in, 'Omsk. Direktoriia. Kolchak', *Novyi zhurnal*, No. 72 (1963), p. 206.
41. GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 110–11.
42. Ibid., ll. 17–19.
43. V.V. Garmiza, 'Iz istorii bor'by rabochikh Sibiri protiv "demokraticeskoi" kontrrevoliutsii (1918)', *Istoriia SSSR*, 1975, No. 4, pp. 123–4.
44. V.A. Kadeikin, *Rabochie Sibiri v bor'be za vlast' sovetov* (Kemerovo, 1966), p. 128.

45. M. Kordonskaia, 'Sibirskoe krest'ianstvo v dni Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii', *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, 1928, No. 9, p. 2.
46. Reznichenko, *Bor'ba bol'shevikov protiv 'demokraticheskoi' kontrrevoliutsii v Sibiri*, p. 91.
47. D.K. Shelestov, 'O nachale povorota sibirskogo trudovogo krest'ianstva v storonu sovetской vlasti', *Istoriia SSSR*, 1962, No. 1, p. 122.
48. Guins, *Sibir', soiuzniki i Kolchak*, p. 122.
49. Stephen M. Berk, 'The Coup d'Etat of Admiral Kolchak: Counterrevolution in Siberia and East Russia, 1917-1918', doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1971, p. 250. Hoover Archive.
50. M.A. Krol', 'Sibirskoe Pravitel'stvo i avgustovskaia sessiia Sibirskoi Oblastnoi Dumy', *Vol'naia Sibir'*, 1928, No. 4, pp. 76-8.
51. It was rumoured that the army was planning to arrest the delegates to the Regional Duma, and that only the intervention of the Czechoslovak Legions blocked these plans: *ibid.*, p. 78.
52. G.Z. Ioffe, *Kolchakovskaia avantiura i ee krakh* (Moscow, 1983), p. 72.
53. Maksakov and Turunov, *Khronika grazhdanskoi voiny v Sibiri (1918-1920)*, p. 203; M.V. Shilovskii in 'Sibirskoe oblastничество i kontrrevoliutsiia: k probleme vzaimootnosheniia', *Iz istorii interventsii i grazhdanskoi voiny v Sibiri na Dal'nem Vostoke* (Novosibirsk, 1985), p. 171.
54. S.P. Mel'gunov, *Tragediia Admirala Kolchaka* (Belgrade, 1930), p. 163.
55. Krol', 'Sibirskoe Pravitel'stvo i avgustovskaia sessiia Sibirskoi Oblastnoi Dumy', pp. 73-4.
56. GARF, f. 1805, op. 1, d. 5, ll. 1 and 6-7.
57. GARF, f. 151, op. 1, d. 4, l. 2.
58. *Ibid.*, l. 11.
59. *Zaria*, 18 September 1918; P. Ostroukhov, Newspaper articles, 1918-1920. Hoover Archive.
60. GARF, f. 131, op. 1, d. 103, l. 7.
61. These decrees are to be found in *Priказы komiteta chlenov Uchreditel'nogo Sobraniia*.
62. N.N. Golovin, *Rossiiskaia kontrrevoliutsiia v 1917-1918 gg.* (Paris, 1937), Part 4, pp. 63-4; Guins, *Sibir', soiuzniki i Kolchak*, p. 143.
63. L.A. Krol', a member of the Kadet Central Committee, played an important role in the negotiations at the Ufa State Conference, and continued to be politically active in Siberia under Kolchak and in the government of the Far Eastern Republic. His memoirs, *Za tri goda* (Vladivostok, 1921), are invaluable for historians of the Civil War in the east.
64. Convinced advocates of coalition, Pavlov and Argunov were critical of the Komuch government. Argunov states that 'I not only refused to take any part in the affairs of Komuch, but also took issue with its legality': 'Omskie dni v 1918 godu', *Sibirskii arkhiv*, 1935, No. 5, p. 191.
65. A.A. Argunov, *Mezhu dvumia bol'shevizmami* (Paris, 1919), p. 12.
66. S.N. Nikolaev, 'Politika "Komucha" (opyt kharakteristiki)', in *Grazhdanskaia voina na Volge* (Prague, 1930), p. 154.
67. F. Chuchin, 'Imperialisticheskaiia interventsii na Dal'nem Vostoke i v Sibiri',

*Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, 1930, No. 11, pp. 41–2.

68. GARF, f. 670, op. 1, d. 1, l. 9.
69. GARF, f. 144, op. 1, d. 27, ll. 16–22. Pepeliaev associated the Socialist Revolutionaries with the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, whereas Gendel'man raised the issue of Kadet ties to the Germans in southern Russia.
70. 'Otchet o komandirovke iz Dobrovol'cheskoi Armii v Sibir' v 1918 godu', p. 292.
71. 'Ufimskoe gosudarstvennoe soveshchanie', *Russkii istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1929, No. 1, p. 65. These are the published stenographic records given to conference delegates which were later deposited in the Prague Archive and subsequently published.
72. GARF, f. 144, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 31–4; S.P. Rudnev, *Pri vechernykh ogniakh* (Kharbin, 1928), pp. 246–7.
73. On 21 September the Derber government agreed to dissolve itself, and on 27 September Khorvat agreed to recognise the authority of Omsk in return for continued control over the Chinese–Eastern Railway Zone. The meetings with Allied representatives had also produced favourable results, with promises of financial and military support from the British and French representatives: Guins, *Sibir', soizuzniki i Kolchak*, p. 229; Mel'gunov, *Tragediia Admirala Kolchaka*, p. 182; M.I. Svetachev, *Imperialisticheskaia interventsiiia v Sibiri i na Dal'nem Vostoke (1918–1922 gg.)* (Novosibirsk, 1983), pp. 91–3.
74. Letter of the Paris delegation of SRs to the Party Central Committee in Moscow. Nicolaevsky collection, series 7, box 8, folder 27. Hoover Archive.
75. 'Ufimskoe gosudarstvennoe soveshchanie', p. 67.
76. Sapozhnikov, a professor of botany and later rector of Tomsk University, was a Regionalist who became minister of education in the Provisional Siberian Government; he died in 1924, having withdrawn from politics after the Kolchak coup: see V.G. Boldyrev, *Direktoriia, Kolchak, Interventy* (Novonikolaevsk, 1925), p. 515.
77. 'Ufimskoe gosudarstvennoe soveshchanie', p. 122.
78. All reference to the land decree of 5 January was removed from the final compromise agreement: 'Ufimskoe gosudarstvennoe soveshchanie', pp. 204 and 212.
79. Quoted by Krol', *Za tri goda*, p. 109.
80. 'Ufimskoe gosudarstvennoe soveshchanie', pp. 190 and 227.
81. In his later deposition to the investigative commission, Krutovskii stated that Vologodskii, at a meeting with him in Krasnoyarsk in mid-September, urged him to return to Omsk as 'the situation that has been created is very serious': GARF, f. 189, op. 1, d. 8, l. 3.

An investigative commission was established by the Provisional Siberian Government on 23 September, in the midst of events, and the Directory assumed control a week later. After the coup of 18 November, the Kolchak government took over the investigation, which was transformed into an indictment of the political left.

82. GARF, f. 189, op. 1, d. 8, l. 11.
83. A.S. Stepanov (Ivanov). Outline for memoirs. Hoover Archive. Stepanov's claims are strengthened by the fact that arrangements were quickly made for his 'escape'

from prison and relocation far from Omsk. Arrest orders were issued on 26 September, by which time Stepanov was nowhere to be found.

The men who shot Novoselov claimed to be acting on Volkov's orders; Volkov in turn maintained that he acted on his own intelligence sources, which warned of an impending coup: GARF, f. 189, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 10–11. Volkov argued that as an officer he was not interested in politics, but subsequently he asserted that 'I am not a politician, but I'm interested in it': GARF, f. 189, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 40–48.

84. GARF, f. 131, op. 1, d. 103, l. 24.
85. GARF, f. 189, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 32–3.
86. GARF, f. 189, op. 1, d. 3, l. 94. Shatilov testified that Mikhailov had telegraphed Gattenberger soon after the Administrative Council's decree of 8 September on the possibility of suspending the Regional Duma to inquire whether the garrison forces in Tomsk were capable of carrying out such a suspension. This telegram was intercepted by the Regional Duma, and this heightened suspicions and animosity towards the authorities in Omsk: GARF, f. 189, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 69–70.
87. Golovin, *Rossiiskaia kontrrevoliutsiia v 1917–1918 gg.*, Part 4, p. 41.
88. Sibirskaiia oblastnaia дума, Nicolaevsky collection, series 145, box 213, folder 1. Hoover Archive.
89. GARF, f. 189, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 100–105.
90. M.P. Golovachev, 'The Siberian Movement and Communism', p. 150: Golovachev Papers, box 1. Bakhmeteff Archive.
91. Maksakov and Turunov, *Khronika grazhdanskoi voiny v Sibiri (1917–1918)*, p. 243.
92. V. Krutovskii, 'Oblastnoe obozrenie', *Sibirskie zapiski*, 1918, No. 4, p. 92. A vote of 4 November was 25 to 18 in favour of dissolution, with all the opposing votes coming from the Socialist Revolutionaries. Iakushev, in a conversation with Avksent'ev on the following day, expressed his concern about securing agreement to the dissolution. It is not clear why the disposition of forces changed so drastically in just a matter of days. GARF, f. 180, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 7–8, 13.
93. While the Komuch cabinet and the Socialist Revolutionary Central Committee members remained in Ufa, the remaining Constituent Assembly delegates relocated to Ekaterinburg after being warned by their own representatives about the dangers of going to Omsk. Soon after the close of the Ufa State Conference, the number of delegates declined from a hundred to roughly 40, reflecting a recognition of the defeat suffered at Ufa: N.V. Sviatitskii, *K istorii Uchreditel'nogo Sobraniia* (Moscow, 1921), p. 72 (note).
94. V.M. Chernov, "'Chernovskaia gramota" i Ufimskaia Direktoriia', p. 3. Chernov Papers. Hoover Archive.
95. GARF, f. 131, op. 1, d. 252, l. 3. A major point of contention centred on the appointments of Mikhailov and Rogovskii, a Socialist Revolutionary who had served as head of the Irkutsk militia under the Provisional Government. Avksent'ev, Zenzinov and Vologodskii all threatened to resign from the Directory at various points in the negotiations. Finally, it was agreed to retain Mikhailov as minister of finance, while Rogovskii was made assistant minister of internal affairs

under Gattenberger (who, it will be remembered, was involved in the actions taken against the Regional Duma in September).

On 31 October, in what was described as the Directory's 'final formulation' regarding Mikhailov, it was stated that 'At the given time, in the present political situation, the inclusion of I.A. Mikhailov in the Council of Ministers would be completely [crossed out] inexpedient and politically harmful.' The Directory added that this should not be seen as an ultimatum; given Mikhailov's retention in the cabinet, it clearly was not: GARF, f. 180, op. 1, d. 2, l. 1.

96. N.I. Rakitnikov, *Sibirskaia reaktsiia i Kolchak* (Moscow, 1920), p. 7.

# 6 Mass Political Consciousness in Soviet Russia in the 1920s

Irina Davidian

The main peculiarity and, at the same time, the main difficulty in the analysis of mass consciousness is that the historian must collect and assimilate the opinions of as many persons as possible of those who were living at the time, concerning both their general attitudes and their approach to concrete political issues. Anyone who has worked with mass sources, especially on social history, would in my opinion agree how difficult this task is, physically, mentally, psychologically and methodologically. A huge mass of 'human' material (that is, material linked with human life) has to be assimilated and then interpreted.

There is, of course, a great temptation to take all these facts, cram them into a computer, press a button and wait for the result. But there is not a computer on earth capable of capturing from a source what is called the spirit of the times, to detect a second and third meaning in the context, and to sense the popular mood. A great deal therefore depends on the intuition and sensitivity of the researcher.

A second difficulty for me personally lies in the terminology. Things which have been grasped intuitively cannot always be verbalised. Many of the concepts which I use – 'mass consciousness', 'political consciousness' and 'Bolshevik consciousness' – do not fully satisfy me, but I cannot as yet find replacements. I shall therefore use them simply as signs or symbols.

The sources which have been utilised can be divided into two groups. Firstly, there are citizens' letters to the state and to Communist Party leaders, located in the newspapers or, in part, to be found in private correspondence subject to censorship. Secondly, there are reports, and résumés of the mood of the population, which were made

by a variety of special organs (above all by the Cheka and the OGPU, but also by Party committees, the political administration of the army or GlavPUR, and so on).

This chapter does not claim to be an exhaustive study, but limits itself to the exposition of three main conclusions derived from a preliminary analysis of the sources. Firstly, the 1920s were a transitional period in the establishment of a Soviet mass consciousness. Secondly, this process was in many respects directed and controlled by the Soviet authorities. Thirdly, the implementation of this policy by the authorities was retarded and corrected by the inertia of the traditional Russian mentality.

Why did the 1920s become a transitional stage in the formation of a Soviet political consciousness (Soviet not just in name, but also in substance)? Firstly, after seven years of bloody and debilitating war (the First World War followed by the Civil War), the long-awaited peace had arrived. The events of these years, and especially the revolution and Civil War, had of course had a huge influence on people's attitudes, but time was needed for this influence to assume concrete forms. An opportunity was required to ponder and reflect quietly, and above all to rest and recuperate. That is why the first years after the Civil War or, to be more precise, after 1921, Kronstadt, the Antonov rising and the introduction of NEP, became a time of mass apoliticism. In 1922, only 22 per cent of electors took part in the elections to the rural Soviets. Many naively supposed that peace had come and that now all would turn full circle and things would revert to their pre-1914 state. But reality was to destroy these illusions. New circumstances interrupted the normal flow of life and demanded immediate adjustments in outlook. But these were not adopted immediately. Initially, the majority of people, and especially the peasants (as sources for 1922, 1923 and 1924 show), did not rise above the level of a simple comparison, 'better or worse': had it become better or worse to live under Soviet rule than under the Tsars? More reasoned and concrete elaborations of this attitude came later, at least for some if not for all.

In addition to the realities of life, there was one more factor which had an enormous influence on mass consciousness. This was the ideological policy of the Soviet leadership. This remained a more or less constant factor for the whole period of Soviet history, but it was in the 1920s that the whole arsenal of methods to be used by this policy was

elaborated and tested. This related not only to ideology in a narrow sense, but also to religion (or to be more accurate, the struggle against religion), to culture and to education, because all these factors were seen as relevant in exerting ideological influence over the masses. Schools, clubs, theatres, village reading rooms, all manner of societies and circles (such as those for the elimination of illiteracy, for political education, and for atheistic readings), the system of political education in the army, and lectures on the international situation which had become a component part of any meeting – all became a base for the ideological influence and education of the masses. Above all else, the press played a huge role in this as a means of mass information. Not only were a large number of Soviet newspapers and journals founded in the 1920s, but also the authorities set up a mechanism of, as it were, reverse communications: work with readers' letters, the institution of workers' and peasants' correspondents (*rabsel'kory*), and the development of such methods of exerting influence as 'newspaper campaigns' and 'newspaper discussions'. No less important in the 1920s were all manner of explanatory campaigns (for example, the 'All-Union Week of the Peasant', the 'Month of the Red Army Soldier', the 'Week of Defence'). In these, a combination of all manner of agitational and propagandistic methods was used to form the desired popular attitude towards this or that fact or political step.

Following from all this, and supported by the documentary evidence, a further conclusion becomes apparent: the creation of a Soviet mass consciousness was in many respects controlled and directed by the regime. In any event, the Bolsheviks applied their maximum endeavours to this end, and frequently proclaimed the role of 'new consciousness' in the construction of socialism. Confirmation that the powers that be were exceptionally interested in the process of formation of this 'new consciousness' is provided by the presence of a huge number of state and party organs in the task of controlling and checking up on the public mood. In addition to the notorious Cheka (VChK)–OGPU, these comprised the informational departments of a variety of organs: local party committees, the executive committees of soviets, political departments in the army, labour exchanges, 'Houses of the Peasants' and others. The sources show how this whole system grew, developed and became more bureaucratic. This was apparent even in the formulation of the documents. The difference becomes very



obvious if one compares the VChK résumés of 1921 with the political reports of OGPU for 1924. The former were marked by their directness of expression and the liveliness of their language, whereas the latter contained a large mass of well organised information in addition to attempts at primary analysis of material and even direct prescriptions to the authorities on how to avoid or liquidate this or that case of discontent. This in fact provides an answer to the question of the purpose of such information on the popular mood: it was needed not just to become aware of what was being thought, but also in order to suppress 'harmful' attitudes and to instil and utilise 'correct' ones. Some examples will be given of how this was done.

Above all else, how could undesirable attitudes be suppressed? Three basic methods of struggle against these were brought into play: encouragement, punishment or the threat of punishment, and propaganda (or 'explanatory work', as it was described). For example, in 1926, Bessonov, the secretary of the Party's Odessa regional committee, in a confidential letter to the Central Committee wrote about the undesirable activity of the 'conservatively-minded intelligentsia', and about the discontent of teachers, and proposed 'to encourage a few scholars by granting them houses or other corresponding marks of gratitude ... but to no more than five persons'.<sup>1</sup> This is an example of the method of using a carrot rather than a stick. Another case demonstrated the use of the stick rather than a carrot. A secretary from one of the village soviets in the Urals countered a refusal by peasants to join the Committee for Mutual Aid by composing a fictitious circular allegedly 'from the Centre' with a threat to use force against saboteurs, and by spreading rumours about it around the village. The next day all the peasants signed up for the Committee for Mutual Aid.<sup>2</sup>

The apparent effectiveness of the third method, the use of propaganda, was surprising. For example, 'after an anti-religious lecture, one [Communist Party] cell passed a resolution to kill the priest'.<sup>3</sup> Another example concerns Trotsky. After he had been sent into exile in 1929, the masses generally showed no reaction at all, or, if they did react, then it was with sympathy for the exile. However, after a series of articles in the press (in Iaroslavl' in particular) which accused Trotsky of all manner of deadly sins, a storm of indignant letters from workers and peasants flowed in. These asked why the traitor had been dealt with so leniently. He should be killed 'like a dog'.<sup>4</sup> At first sight, the

gullibility of the masses and their readiness to believe any official information reached an absurd level for a time. However, in my view the question of the gullibility of the masses is not so simple. Mistrust of the authorities was one of the characteristic traits of peasant psychology, and peasants comprised the majority of the population of Russia and the USSR. Therefore, peasant psychology could not but demonstrate a decisive influence on the Russian mentality. What is important is not that people believed the propaganda, but that they gave the possibility of allowing themselves to be convinced. This was initially a distinctive manifestation of a feeling of self-respect, in the context of a general backwardness in political culture. However, the readiness of the masses to believe official propaganda was more and more often stimulated by a combination of propaganda and punishment, or by intimidation. Only one of a multitude of such examples will be cited. In the autumn of 1927, the Information Department of the OGPU noted in a report on the reaction of various layers of the population to the danger of war that two factors had been influential in diminishing defeatism. These were the 'Defence Week' (that is, a propaganda campaign), and the shooting of 20 counter-revolutionaries in Moscow by organs of the OGPU.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the elimination of 'harmful' attitudes, the authorities identified 'necessary' views and used them as a basis for and confirmation of their own policies. In this context, the authorities were not squeamish about switching concepts. For example, they often used the anti-clerical views of the population, but passed them off as denoting anti-religiosity. As is demonstrated by archival evidence, a negative attitude to the clergy and to church property was widespread in post-revolutionary Russia. Thus, the 1922 campaign to confiscate church valuables was met with sympathy, especially in the famine-stricken regions.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, there was mass approval of the idea of purging the Party and state apparatus, although rank-and-file members naturally differed from the Party leadership in their understanding of this concept. Thus, letters to the newspaper *Pravda* on the subject of the purge of 1929 show that very few understood the true aim of the purges and spoke out against them. The majority welcomed the idea of a purge and suggested better ways of carrying it out. For example, a certain Protasov wrote to the Central Committee, 'in my opinion, this purge can be carried out in two ways. The first way is to conduct a special campaign with a hue and cry in the newspapers, and so on. The

second way is to select an appropriate body of Party members and to get them to carry out this task quietly, without newspaper sensations and without any of the attributes of a campaign. I think that a purge by the second route is more efficient and, what is more important, cheaper'.<sup>7</sup>

All these facts have been cited to confirm the thesis that the process of creating a new consciousness had its organised and intentional aspects. But this process also had another and perhaps more important side – a spontaneous one. What is meant by this is the way in which the ideas of Bolshevism were adapted by mass consciousness and in which they also adapted themselves under the influence of new ideas and new realities. This was a complex process, which was unequal at different levels of society and in different periods. It is a no less complex task to subject it to analysis. Therefore an attempt will be made only to demonstrate its fundamental tendencies schematically, taking as a basis the consciousness of the Orthodox peasantry, principally in the European part of Russia (firstly because peasant consciousness was dominant in a peasant country, and secondly because these are the limits imposed by the available sources).

First of all, what is political consciousness? In my view, its basic components are the population's attitude towards the regime and towards society, the level of the people's political culture, its political ideals, and national, religious and ethical aspects. Since it is not possible to deal with all these aspects, only the first three – the most important – will be covered.

So far as attitudes towards the regime are concerned, the traditional relationship between the Russian people and the authorities was a 'family' one, with the regime representing the father and the people his children. Thus, paternalism typified the attitude of the authorities, while popular attitudes were marked by infantilism, dependency and a naive faith in the tsar as the good father. What changed after the revolution and civil war? The sources show that nothing in practice was altered. The overwhelming majority of the people continued to perceive a family character in their relations with the regime. The family link even strengthened to a certain degree, since the regime became 'our own', worker-and-peasant by its nature. Childish jealousies even developed in this relationship: the peasants thought that the regime had its 'sons' (the workers) and its 'stepsons' (themselves, the peasants). The

huge quantity of the letters addressed to the organs of authority with various demands and requests can serve as an indicator of an attitude of dependency towards the regime. The basis leitmotif of these letters was 'give': give us money, paper, books, bread, work, freedom, culture and so on. Give, but if you are not able to, then get out of office. Significantly, the majority of the petitioners did not even know whom they were addressing: they mixed up the names of the leaders and the titles of the organs of power, and most often of all simply addressed the 'dear leaders of the Soviet government'. Naive monarchism, another trait of traditional peasant consciousness, was reflected in this failure to understand, or to accept, a collective form of leadership. In the peasants' view, there should be one tsar, albeit a good one. This led to the deification of Lenin after his death (instances are known of peasants crossing themselves before his portrait). This is explained by the peasants' frequent demand for one ruler, be he tsar, president or general secretary. For example, one peasant wrote to the Central Committee, 'they had a revolution in Germany too, and they elected a tsar all the same [by this, he meant President Hindenburg – I.D.]. It'll be the same in other countries, as a tsar is no different from a president.'<sup>8</sup> A peasant correspondent maintained, 'we need "our" national leader, a single one for the whole Union; he's needed by the Party and by the peasantry. We most definitely need him.'<sup>9</sup> Another eloquent letter stated, 'the opposition says that it's against the creation of a leader of the Party, but I want to say to everyone that we've got to have this leader. We need to have just one, since all the names cannot be remembered by each party member and candidate member, let alone by ordinary workers and peasants. We need one name, to ring out as resonantly and convincingly as the name "Lenin". "Stalin" is just such a name. This is the name which must be spread around ....'<sup>10</sup>

Another trait traditional to the peasant mentality will now be investigated, one which was linked with the long dominance of the commune (*obshchina*) in their life and labour. It produced a specific communal psychology, based on ideas of collectivism, egalitarianism and collective responsibility. The concept of the *mir* or rural society had for centuries been the sole social category for the peasants. In the Soviet period (after the civil war, when the first levelling process occurred in the village) this was manifested, on the one hand, by the rejection of social sharing-out within the village (except for the poor

peasants, for whom this was materially advantageous), and, on the other hand, by the clear opposition of the whole peasantry to the working class. These attitudes were a form of social self-defence, an attempt, even if subconscious, to resist the pressures from the proletarian state and a new enslavement. An example of this is provided by the movement to create 'peasant unions', which was initiated in 1924 and reached its peak in 1926–27. The majority of peasants understood the concept of a 'peasants' union' very narrowly, as a sort of peasants' trade union, defending their interests, or more often even more narrowly as a means of regulating agricultural prices. Some peasants saw in it an alternative to the communist workers' party. 'If the peasants' union is revived, then every party should die, since it will crush them, and it will be the greatest organisation in the world', one of them wrote.<sup>11</sup> This could not but provoke alarm in the ruling party. It was therefore no wonder that it should devote all its efforts to the suppression of the movement for peasants' unions. The collectivism of the Russian peasant went in the face of the generally individual character of the peasants' work. This contradiction put a brake on the social activity of the peasants and impeded their practical unionisation. The tragedy of the historical situation was that the collectivism of the Russian peasantry seemed to be too small for conscious unionisation, but was sufficient for the creation of collective farms, which forced the peasants into an alternative form of unionisation.

Not much will be said about egalitarian tendencies – only that they were a manifestation of the peasant's utopian concepts of socialism which were especially widespread in the 1920s. One very instructive example was provided by a peasant, Ivan Khomich, who proposed the enactment of the following law: *'The law for workers and clerks:* (1) There must be an eight-hour working day. (2) Clerks must wear uniforms. (3) Workers shall also wear a uniform ... (5) Workers and clerks must have the same food rations: if one is to have an onion, all should have an onion, if one has meat, then all should have meat. *The law for peasants:* Annual harvest surpluses must be handed over to the state, there should be one uniform for everyone also, and also the same daily food allowance. ... long live socialism!'<sup>12</sup>

In my view, the exceptional popularity of egalitarian ideas in Russia resulted from the under-development of private property relations and from the consequent absence of a civil society and a mass political

culture. The latter circumstance played a very large role since the popular consciousness which had been liberated by the revolution had in practice been turned by it into a *tabula rasa*, open to the acceptance of any ideas or any political culture. I even venture to propose that if another party had come to power in 1917, there would then have been a mass consciousness of a different character. But history decided otherwise. After eliminating their ideological competitors, the Bolsheviks essentially held a monopoly in terms of ideological and cultural influence over the masses. There hence ensued a high level of politicisation of the population, and its quick mastery of revolutionary and communist terminology (often at a superficial level, and without any deep understanding). This gave rise to the phenomenon of revolutionary 'proselytism', when new communists (defined in terms of their world view, and not just of their membership of the Communist Party), just like newly converted Catholics trying to be holier than the Pope, went to absurd extremes in their revolutionary zeal to transform the whole world. There are many examples of this, ranging from numerous ridiculous projects, from a new chronology to the construction of the Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, to quite frequent letters from citizens requesting that they be sent abroad to kill especially malicious enemies of the Soviet regime, of the type of Kautsky or Zankov. The value of human life, one's own or someone else's, fell dramatically in popular evaluation in the attitudes of the 1920s. This was another aspect of Bolshevik consciousness, the moral one. As such, it lies beyond the scope of this chapter, as do national, religious or some other aspects.

The aim of this study has been to illustrate its main propositions:

1. that it was in the 1920s that a Bolshevik political consciousness was in the main formed in the people (although not conclusively, as was confirmed by the purges and repressions of the 1930s);
2. that this process was in many respects directed and controlled by the regime;
3. that possibly more important was the self-adaptation of the popular consciousness and the assimilation by the people of new ideas. But the inertia of the traditional peasant mentality retarded and corrected the process of the creation of a new consciousness. The Bolsheviks did, however, succeed in utilising some of these

traditional traits of the Russian mentality (for example, collectivism, egalitarianism, collective responsibility naive monarchism and deification of the authorities), whereas others (infantilism, dependence and irresponsibility) proved to be ineradicable.

## Notes

1. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 85, d. 68, l. 13.
2. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 858, l. 66.
3. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 907, l. 88.
4. GARF, f. 3316, op. 16a, d. 425, ll. 101–34.
5. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 85, d. 289, l. 2.
6. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 296, ll. 2–3.
7. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 85, d. 495, l. 68.
8. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 87, d. 188, l. 121.
9. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 1017, l. 65.
10. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 85, d. 485, l. 174.
11. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 85, d. 16, l. 267.
12. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 85, d. 16, l. 244.

# 7 Suicide among Representatives of Active Social Groups in the USSR in the 1920s

Viktoriia Tiazhel'nikova

The crisis of Soviet power which entailed a change in political course by the Bolsheviks, and the transition to NEP, could not but impinge upon the social-psychological sphere of human life.

The idea of the class division of society, which achieved practical expression in the Civil War years, can be described as dominant in this period. New communist hypertrophied principles of life arose out of the ruins of the primordial Russian orthodox ethos. Almost all moral norms and categories suffered radical changes. This was true above all of groups of concepts which could be grouped together in a system of concepts of 'sinfulness and conscience'. This led to a real review of values, and to the transformation of people's way of life and social conduct. In our work, we have tried to investigate this in the case of one of the most significant of phenomena – the suicides among representatives of the politically active social groups.

In 1925, the statistical bodies stated that there had been a sharp upsurge of suicides in those social groups which were at the epicentre of the ruling ideology, and on whom fell the greatest burden in the construction of the new society, and which most actively denied religious faith.<sup>1</sup> Such groups were members of the Communist Party, the Komsomol and the Red Army Command. Various data indicate that suicides comprised between 7 and 15 per cent of the general total of deaths in these categories adjusted to take account of the specifics of social groups and age.



## **1. The Scale of the Tragedy**

The broken and fragmentary nature of the sources which have been preserved make the evaluation of the scale of the sharply increasing number of suicides a complex matter. In working with the documents which contain evidence about the suicides, it is most important to analyse the circumstances which influenced the production of the sources, and the aims of those contemporaries who tried to understand and explain this complex, tragic and multi-faceted phenomenon. The subjective factor looms large in these sources, and the real and full picture, especially the statistical one, is very difficult to reconstruct, and is sometimes intentionally obscured. This is understandable. The statistics of suicide were for many years a closed theme, as indicators of insecurity in society, and among individual social groups.

The main body of sources on this theme was assembled under a strong ideological influence, which resulted from the attitude of the Central Committee of the Communist Party to this phenomenon. Some of the materials were deliberately destroyed, but those which have been preserved allow one to track down, in my view, the essential features of the suicide question. The basic components of the complex of materials include the following: in first place, the general demographical statistical sources;<sup>2</sup> secondly, materials from special investigations, including sociological ones, which were conducted into some of the most unfortunate, in this respect, social groups, and statistical evidence about these groups.<sup>3</sup> A third group comprises protocols of party meetings and discussion materials in the party press on this question. These allow one to investigate the attitudes of official party circles, and of rank-and-file communists to this theme.<sup>4</sup>

A fourth set of sources is very important in achieving an understanding of the problem: personal letters and diaries, and also memoirs, which give an evaluation of the facts surrounding suicides and deal with the causes of this phenomenon.<sup>5</sup>

### *The general demographical statistics*

There was a tradition of studying the phenomenon of suicide in pre-revolutionary Russia. This problem was tackled both in its practical aspect (by doctors, psychiatrists and teachers) and more generally in

terms of philosophical and religious – moral problems and social – psychological considerations. Suicide was studied in detail and depth by use of the criminal and medical statistics and other data collected by the zemstvos (local government assemblies).

In the 1920s the Central Statistical Administration became the successor to the Russian statistical school, and from 1922 began to register suicides in special statistical sheets. The judicial expertise section of the People's Commissariat of Health conducted parallel calculations, and for a short time such information was also collected by organs of the militia, and by NKVD criminal investigations. The Department of Moral Statistics of the Central Statistical Administration became the leading organisation in the study of suicide.<sup>6</sup>

In the autumn of 1921, the Section of Moral Statistics composed a sheet for the registration of suicides, with instructions on how to fill it in.<sup>7</sup> This sheet included the following indicators: surname, first names, sex, age, nationality, native language, religious faith, education, permanent place of residence, marital status (with a detailed spectrum of answers to the question in cases where a marriage was not registered), whether there were children and how many, permanent profession, occupation before the October Revolution, occupation or trade at the time of committing suicide (with detailed gradations), means of committing suicide (with detailed gradation), the place where the suicide was committed, the time it was committed, its causes, whether there had been earlier attempts, notes and supplements, and who was providing the information. As a result of a series of circumstances which will be discussed below, the section 'religious faith' was in 1926 replaced by a section 'party status', which in itself seems a symbolic enough but very sombre fact. The simple enumeration of the details demanded on the registration sheet is evidence in itself that more than enough information is available for a basic statistical study of the question.

To complete the picture, one should add that the filling in of the forms was also strictly regulated.<sup>8</sup> A questionnaire was completed for each case of suicide by the institutions which registered the death. The statistical bureau at the corresponding level supervised the accuracy of the completion of the sheet and the corresponding instructions. The completed questionnaires were sent on a monthly basis from the branches of ZAGS (registry of births, marriages and deaths) to the provincial statistical bureau, after which the sheets were processed

by the statistical bureau and then sent on to the State Statistical Administration.

Judging from the documents, there were disagreements in the summer and autumn of 1925 in the Department of Moral Statistics on the registration of suicides, which basically centred on whether it was necessary to continue registering such cases with branches of ZAGS, or whether the whole business should be transferred to the police.<sup>9</sup> This dispute was resolved in favour of ZAGS. In 1922, 2,599 such sheets came to the Central Statistical Administration, 4,408 in 1923, 5,118 in 1924 and 6,303 in 1925.<sup>10</sup> The Department of Moral Statistics subjected these to statistical analysis, and published the results with tables of the various indicators for the years 1922–25 and 1926 in two studies in the Central Statistical Administration series.

These published materials provide the fullest summarised statistics of suicide, since further research has shown that the original materials have not been preserved in the archive of the Central Statistical Administration in RGAE, and by instruction of the Department of Moral Statistics, copies of the registration sheets were not kept in ZAGS. Thus, the number of registration sheets reaching the Central Statistical Administration provide the sole approximate indicator of the general number of suicides in the USSR, effectively beginning from 1923 when the registration process was firmly in place.

*Statistics of suicides by separate social and professional groups, and sociological investigations of them.*

The fullest statistical picture for suicides in the 1920s is available for members and candidate members of the Communist Party and for members of the Komsomol, and of the Red Army. This is linked with the upsurge of suicide among representatives of these groups in 1925. The causes of this sharp increase were studied by researchers from the Statistical, Organisational, Secret and Information departments of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and others from the Main Political Administration of the Red Army. Files of these materials are kept in RTsKhIDNI and TsGASA.

The results of the whole series of sociological investigations have to be integrated with the main body of sources. Thus, in the context of the unexpected upsurge of suicides, studies have been undertaken of the

material position of communists,<sup>11</sup> pressures on the time of the representatives of the party *nomenklatura*<sup>12</sup> and ordinary members of the Communist Party in the Machine Gun Factory and in the Abel'man works of Kovrov in Vladimir province.<sup>13</sup>

What were the statistics of suicides among communists, and can any facts be addressed to permit an evaluation of the complicated phenomenon, described as 'the upsurge of suicides in the party'?

Three documents provide a starting-point for an explanation of the statistics of suicide. The first of these is a paper by E.G. Smitten, the head of the statistical department of the Communist Party Central Committee, which is dated 1925 and entitled 'On the number of suicides among Communists'. It is brief, and therefore can be quoted in its entirety: 'In the first quarter of the current year 81 (13 per cent) of the 616 deaths of communists were suicides – 50 members and 31 candidates. It is possible that the number of suicides was greater, as many organisations do not give information about the causes of death of their members.'<sup>14</sup> This document is the key to the reconstruction of the statistical data. It follows from it that one in eight of the communists who died in 1925 took their own lives, in itself an extremely high and anomalous index. Further analysis has to take into account that these figures are lowered by all the other factors and information brought into play, in addition to the fact that a number of organisations did not indicate the cause of death of their members. It is clear from the special literature that 'the spring months bring an increase in nervous illness, which probably explains the greater number of suicides noted at the beginning of the year'.<sup>15</sup> Thus, if one tries to calculate the annual figure for the above data, one has to bear in mind that the factor of the time of year will lower the real figure. We do not possess information on the mortality by age groups, but know only the general number of deaths among communists.

In its report, the Statistical Department did not consider evidence from the Red Army and Fleet, which is included in the corresponding documents of the Information Department of the Political Administration of the Red Army Command. The growth in the number of suicides was analysed in a report by Khataevich, from the Organisational Department, and Chernevskii, Head of the Information and Statistics Department of the Political Administration. From this report, it is clear that communists formed 15 per cent of the total of 497 cases

of suicide in the Red Army in 1924, or an average of eleven communists per quarter in 1924.<sup>16</sup> Analysis of statistical and non-statistical sources allows one to say that the number of suicides at the beginning of 1924 was lower than the corresponding figures for the beginning of 1925. Calculating from the summary evidence for the first quarter of 1925 and 1924, given the lack of other evidence for 1925, and combining the data from Smitten's report on the Communist Party as a whole, and Khataevich's on the Red Army, one reaches the conclusion that there were a minimum of 92 cases of suicide among communists for the first quarter (of the reconstructed year).

We have no more exact evidence on the general number of suicides in the USSR than the general total of registration sheets reaching the Central Statistical Office from the Registries of Births, Marriages and Deaths. Taking this as the point of departure, we find that there was a total of 6,303 cases in 1925, including 5,210 related to the age group 18–59 years. Thus, communists comprised 7 per cent, at a minimum, of those who killed themselves in 1925.

After a precise study of the causes of suicide by corresponding age groups, comparing them with the mortality data and also after an analysis of the share of communists in each group, the Central Committee apparatus of the Communist Party detected an obvious predominance of communists among such traditional groups of causes as disillusionment with life, dissatisfaction with service, material causes and nervous disorders, and exclusion from the Party.

## **2. The Quest for Causes**

Contemporaries naturally began to try to find out why the number of suicides was growing in the party and Komsomol, to ascertain the social background of this phenomenon and, finally, to decide what means should be taken to arrest this process. Answers to these three questions can be provided by the second basic body of source materials on this question, namely the results of the sociological investigators and the reports of the Central Committee employees who had studied this question. As noted above, such documents contain three basic component parts: the exposition of concrete facts, the citing of pre-death notes, and the concrete statistical results of investigations and the

conditions under which they were conducted. But they also have two subjective aspects : the evaluation of the concrete fact of suicide by the immediate entourage and the general conclusions drawn by the researchers studying the problem in the mid-1920s. These component parts, in my view, have to be strictly separated in analysis of these materials, which are still the sole evidence of such a kind available.

*The quest for causes by the apparatus of the Central Committee*

Let us begin with an investigation of where the Central Committee researchers sought the causes of the suicides, the methods they used and the conclusions which they reached. The relevant archival documents from RTsKhIDNI and TsGASA allow us to state that the facts of a growth in the number of suicides in the enumerated groups was established immediately. A report from the organisational department of the Central Committee stated: 'suicides have begun to take on something not far short of a mass character in some party organisations'.<sup>17</sup> Work began to determine the causes of this phenomenon. Khataevich designated the following as the sociological background to the growth in the numbers of suicides among communists: 'the deprivations and shocks endured by party members in the years of the Civil War have begun really to tell only in the past year or two'.<sup>18</sup> 'Measures to overcome this situation should be directed towards improving their material position and establishing a more tactful and thoughtful approach to individual comrades by the corresponding leaders and leading organs. There should also be a fuller investigation of the state of health of the grass-roots party activists.'<sup>19</sup>

The conclusion of the report determined the future direction of the sociological investigations. Their themes became studies of pressures on the time of the party *nomenklatura*, and of the material position of communists. Party medical commissions were established simultaneously in the Altai and Nizhegorod provincial committees, which stated that there was an absence of healthy communists, and which analysed the basic groups of illnesses (nervous, heart and lung illnesses) in relation to the type of work being undertaken (party, Soviet, OGPU). Doctor I.V. Grigor'ev, the chairman of the special medical commission of the Altai provincial executive committee, noted in a foreword to the report that 'the Communist Party in general presents psycho-

physiological material which is too interesting and historically completely new for one to put limits on the enormous problem of communist psycho-physiology, which is only just now coming into being'.<sup>20</sup> From a medical point of view, what were the basic illnesses characteristic of this new psycho-physiological type? The investigations which were carried out in the Altai encompassed 163 individuals, of whom 54 worked at provincial level, 59 at district and ten at regional level. In so far as the illnesses were in most cases combined with each other, the percentages given in the report are not absolute. Thus, it appeared that 124 (76.4 per cent) suffered from a nervous illness, 103 (63.7 per cent) from tuberculosis and catarrh of the upper respiratory system, 80 (49.8 per cent) from rheumatism, 69 (42.5 per cent) from anaemia, and 47 (29.3 per cent) from heart diseases. The commission found only one person to be in satisfactory health.<sup>21</sup>

However, the Altai regional committee's commission went further in its generalisations. It divided up the more widespread illnesses according to the level of work in the party and soviet. The resulting table made clear one regular pattern: the higher the level, the greater was the percentage of sufferers from all three groups of the most widespread illness. Thus, for example, 82.2 per cent of those working at provincial level suffered from some form of nervous illness compared with 76.6 per cent of those at district level and 58 per cent among the rank-and-file. The corresponding figures for tuberculosis were 72.3 per cent, 66.1 per cent and 46 per cent. Doctor I.V. Grigor'ev also noticed one specific of these nervous illnesses. He wrote: 'I did not register a single case of chronic neurasthenia; on the contrary, all the neurasthenics who appeared before me were bearers of fresh and young forms of neurasthenia of a variety of strengths and character, which had appeared as a consequence of a reactive overstraining of the nervous-mental system, which was expressed as a direct result of the influence of restructuring work and the bio-psychological stressful experiences associated with it.'<sup>22</sup> Where did these 'young forms of neurasthenia' come from? Was it not, in fact, a consequence of the strong influence of the social shock induced by the revolution and civil war on spiritually and morally as yet unsteered souls?

As one of the rank-and-file communists of this generation wrote, 'people such as me had not formed a set ideology by the time of the October Revolution; as a raw 18-year-old youth I threw myself into

defence of the conquests of the revolution with supreme loyalty, no one pressured me ... In the name of the party and the revolution, it was necessary to carry out mass executions – they took place. It was necessary to burn whole villages in Ukraine and in Tambov province – they were burned, while we whistled. It was necessary to drive barefoot and unclothed Red Army men into battle – we drove them, sometimes by persuasion, sometimes by the muzzle of a revolver.’<sup>23</sup>

Such a physical and psychological condition obviously created the soil for actions at a mass level which are hard to understand from today’s perspective.

Pre-death notes are a most important source for determining the causes of suicides. We lack a full set of documents of this sort. However, notes are cited in our second group of sources and also in the protocols of party meetings. On the one hand, they give their contents, and on the other a commentary on them, provided by the researcher involved. Thus, for example, the note ‘the tasks have become larger, and I do not have the necessary intellectual capacity to cope with them’<sup>24</sup> was categorised by a Statistical Department researcher as overworking in service. A large quantity of facts of this sort were produced.

*Explanation of the causes, and the attitude of contemporaries to what had happened*

The whole course of the discussion of concrete cases of suicide is most remarkable. Sometimes it allowed participants at a meeting to come to generalisations of a more general character. Here there was often a clash between official and personal attitudes towards the fact of suicide. Thus, for example, at a closed party meeting of Kavshkola on 5 August 1925, a party cell secretary Matsievskii clearly expressed the official line when he said, ‘a communist who shoots himself ceases to be a communist, since a communist must be a stalwart warrior in all difficult moments’.<sup>25</sup>

At the same party meeting, a second speaker said that arrests had become extremely fashionable as a consequence of the strengthening of discipline, and party democracy had been limited. A third speaker noted that ‘S. was buried like a dog’. He knew about Trotsky’s speech at the funeral of a high-ranking colleague at VTsSPS (the central trade



union council) and hence drew the conclusion, 'we have a split between the rank and file and the top brass.'<sup>26</sup>

Thus, a thorough study of the protocols of party meetings enables us to delineate the whole spectrum of opinions on this question, and also sometimes to detect a point of view which went contrary to those generally accepted. The strong psychological impact of suicide among those present contributed greatly to this.

Diaries and letters add significantly to the body of sources when they analyse the causes of suicide in the party milieu at the beginning of the 1920s. Of particular interests is the diary of the IKP student Litvinov in which he reviews several cases of such a nature in the IKP.<sup>27</sup>

Several documents have also been preserved which were written in the form of personal observations of suicide. One such is a note entitled 'My opinion on suicides in the Red Army in general', written by Leitendorf, head of staff of the Artillery Regiment of the Third Crimean Division, and a Communist Party member since 1909.<sup>28</sup>

This group of sources also allow one to come close to an evaluation of this phenomenon in the party, but the materials of the protocols of party meetings give a fuller picture.

### **3. The Causes of the Tragedy: Formulation of the Problem**

The October Revolution and the development of the country in the inter-war period led to a catastrophic deformation of principles, to a breakdown of the traditional way and pace of life, and to a radical change in ethical and moral norms. The elaboration and development of new stereotypes in people's conduct and consciousness was also facilitated.

The class idea of the division of society according to dogmatised social schemes turned the country into an arena for the struggle of citizen against citizen, which had baneful consequences for both sides, standing as they did on opposite sides of the barricades. 'Deformation' can be taken as the key word, characterising the social psychology of Soviet people of the 1920s and early 1930s. This is the concept which characterises the demolition of stable Russian morality, forming a lacuna in its place which provided favourable soil for instability on a mass scale.

Another no less important side of class struggle was the psychological condition of 'being driven into a corner', which for some was the consequence of unrealised, dogmatised ideals, and for others the result of their being brought to the edge of a precipice, both in a social sense and in terms of living conditions.

These factors created favourable conditions for the manipulation of mass consciousness and the arousal of social hysteria. The 'march of enthusiasts' unconditionally supported by Comrade Stalin can be considered a manifestation of this, as can the spy mania and search for 'enemies of the people'. These two sides of the social psychology of the Soviet people have one and the same causation and socio-psychological roots.

Anomalous social behaviour, especially at a mass level, has traditionally been seen as a mark of a lack of well-being in society in a given historical period. It is important not to limit oneself to a statement of such insecurity, but also to present it as some sort of culminating point, in which the specific traits of the period under review find their fullest expression. It is here that the hypertrophied influence of the authorities on people were most fully manifested, and the ethical and moral crisis of the epoch found clear expression.

## Notes

1. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 1013, ll. 6–18; d. 953, l. 18, op. 18, d. 138, ll. 36–45.
2. *Samoubiistva v SSSR. 1922–1925. Trudy TsSU SSSR. Otdel moral'noi statistiki* (Moscow, 1927); *Samoubiistva v SSSR v 1925 i 1926g. TsSU Sektor sotsial'noi statistiki* (Moscow, 1929).
3. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 1013, l. 953; op. 68, d. 102, l. 138.
4. An extract from the protocol of a meeting of the Kavshola cell Bureau of 5 August 1928 on the question of Spadchii's suicide and the political-moral state of the school is a characteristic example of discussion of a case of suicide: RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 953, ll. 36–40.
5. 'Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva', *Voprosy istorii*, 1990, No. 5, p. 54; 'Ptitsegonstvo nadoeelo do smerti. Iz dnevnika ... Litvinova. 1922 g'. (Publikatsiia V. Genisa i A. Ershova), *Neizvestnaia Rossiia XX vek* (Moscow, 1993), pp. 81–139.
6. RGAE, f. 1562, op. 1, d. 261.
7. RGAE, f. 1562, op. 1, d. 261, ll. 5, 11, 28.
8. 'Osnovnye polozheniia o postanovke statistiki samoubiistva v RSFSR', RGAE, f.

- 1562, op. 1, d. 261, l. 6.
9. 'Protokoly mezhdovedomstvennogo soveshchaniia po voprosam ratsionalizatsii organov ZAGS ot 9 sentiabria 1925 g. i ot 8-9 iulia 1925 g.', RGAE f. 1562, op. 1, d. 261, ll. 45-6.
  10. Samoubiistva v SSSR. 1922-1925.
  11. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 138; op. 84, d. 1013, l. 20.
  12. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 135.
  13. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 136.
  14. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 102, l. 93.
  15. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 953, l. 18.
  16. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 138, l. 34.
  17. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 138, l. 37.
  18. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 138, l. 44.
  19. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 138, l. 45.
  20. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 138, l. 52.
  21. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 138, l. 52 ob.
  22. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 138, l. 53 ob.
  23. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 153, ll. 10-11.
  24. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 1013, l. 72.
  25. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 953, l. 36.
  26. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 953, l. 38.
  27. See 'Ptitsegonstvo nadoelo do smerti...'.  
28. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 953, l. 31.

## 8 Stalinism in Post-Soviet Historical Writing

John Keep

The purpose of this chapter is to draw attention to recent scholarly work by historians in the Russian Federation on major problems of the Stalin era. We cannot consider here writings by their counterparts in other republics of the former Soviet Union, and for practical reasons we shall confine ourselves mainly to journal articles. Where books are mentioned, difficulties of access require one to rely heavily on reviewers' descriptions. This may be seen as a follow-up to an earlier study of Soviet historiography during the *perestroika* era, and as a complement to J. Baberowski's survey of recent Western writing on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

### **Filling in the Blank Spots**

How far have Russian writers succeeded in coming to terms with the totalitarian legacy? Or, conversely, how far does their output merely serve to reinforce Russian national consciousness and even neo-imperial aspirations? In trying to answer such questions, which are as much political as historiographical, we have to remember that in Russia the social sciences have always been highly susceptible to political influences. During the Soviet era people were arbitrarily prevented from knowing their true past and instead were fed a fraudulent substitute. As the late former dissident historian Alexander Nekrich put it,

The Party pursued the aim, which was never stated directly in public, of creating a new collective memory, of destroying completely the recollection of what had actually happened ... [The people's] memory was filled with things that never happened: an artificial memory, so to speak, was created. If someone were suddenly to clap his hands and exclaim: 'But for heaven's sake, it didn't happen like that!', he was

regarded as extremely dangerous. Authority at once demanded that he renounce and repent his opinions. If he did not do so, it took revenge on him.<sup>2</sup>

It was more than a matter of negative censorship: the controllers sought to impose a highly specific, uniform view of the world that would legitimise the party's authority and values. They did so in many different ways: through their policy on academic cadres, by influencing the choice of themes for research and discussion, or by rewriting the text of what was allowed to appear in print. This forced scholars and journalists to write 'for the drawer' or else to resort to 'double-think', presenting a conformist face to outsiders while trying to conserve their personal autonomy. In short, they compromised themselves in order to survive.

Fortunately, total thought control is an impossibility, despite all the devices of modern technology, and under Brezhnev the system was unobtrusively undermined. The party forfeited its ideological credibility and moral stature. Gorbachev's reforms, and specifically his willingness to permit a limited degree of *glasnost*, brought about something akin to a cultural revolution: an explosion of popular demand for knowledge of the truth, about past as well as current issues. The intelligentsia challenged a system that had been hollowed out from within and so played a vital part in bringing down the regime.

Since December 1991, material conditions for professional people have seriously deteriorated. Many have lost their jobs: salaries, their value eroded by inflation, remain unpaid for months; pensioners in particular face destitution, while others scrape a living by performing menial tasks. Naturally, all of this has led to a wave of nostalgia for the recent past, if not necessarily for the harsh discipline of Stalin. Many people are experiencing an 'identity crisis' which can most easily be remedied by turning to nationalistic ideas, myths and symbols. As M. Confino puts it, 'the conceptual disintegration of the basic assumptions of Soviet historical thought' has produced an 'identity vacuum' filled by 'nationalistic positivism', neo-Marxism or neo-Slavophilism.<sup>3</sup> One might add that even more common is a 'flight from the past' into indifference, a reluctance even to consider what went wrong when, or might be responsible for one's present plight, coupled with a search for scapegoats.

However understandable such reactions may be psychologically,

they do not make for a healthy intellectual climate in which a serious re-examination of the past can take place. In such circumstances one must take comfort from the fact that at least a debate of sorts is going on in which alternative viewpoints are freely expressed, sometimes buttressed by historical documentation. The picture is by no means all bleak. Clearly, it will take generations for a consensus to emerge about the achievements and costs of 'Sovietism'. In the meantime, many of those celebrated 'blank spots' are being slowly filled in, hundreds of native and foreign researchers are toiling in the archives, and the commercial market allows a modest place to a range of journals that have scholarly pretensions.

Let us look a little more closely at the last two points before surveying recent literature on the Stalin era. The state archival administration has been reformed and is now officially a 'service' whose purpose is to meet the needs of society and individual citizens, not just those of the state. A presidential decree to this effect, issued on 30 September 1992, was followed by a ruling that each archive repository had complete right of ownership over everything that it contained, and on 7 July 1993 by the Fundamental Principles Relating to Archive Matters.<sup>4</sup> These established an automatic thirty-year access rule (75 years where individuals are concerned) but also contained some provisions that seem questionable: for example, state 'tutelage' (*popechenie*) over private archives 'at their owners' request', or the right accorded to social organisations to 'assist' in archival work (paragraphs 20, 13, 15). Nor did the government make any explicit promise that documents transferred from special repositories would be made available to researchers.

These rules have been variously applied in practice. Neither the Presidential Archive (APRF, formed in 1990) nor that of the state security authorities, AMBRF,<sup>5</sup> is open to independent researchers as the others are. However, the most sensitive documents, kept in the 'special *fondy*' of the Presidential Archive, are gradually being released to the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) or to other repositories, and some of them are then published. Two of these repositories, RTsKhIDNI and TsKhSD, contain the bulk of the papers of the CPSU Secretariat and departments.<sup>6</sup> The late Dmitrii Volkogonov claimed that during his chairmanship of a parliamentary commission on archive access (1990–93) this body was responsible for

declassifying no fewer than 78 million party files.<sup>7</sup> The total number of units at the State Archive Service's disposal has been put at 204 million.<sup>8</sup>

Most welcome are the various guides that are being published to previously secret holdings by GARF's Publication Centre. Of these the most relevant to our theme are two catalogues prepared by V.A. Kozlov and S.V. Mironenko containing some 2,500 police reports to Stalin between 1944 and 1953.<sup>9</sup> The Archive Service is planning to produce catalogues of correspondence between the security authorities and two other Soviet leaders (Khrushchev and Malenkov), and also with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Beria's 'special folder' in three volumes with 7,500 documents.<sup>10</sup> Yet further catalogues are being prepared in conjunction with American academic organisations in Stanford and Pittsburgh, and there is an international project to reproduce *in extenso* the files of the CPSU's leading bodies. Given the degree of secrecy that enshrouded such registers in Soviet times, this is progress indeed. There is already more information available than can be readily absorbed. For the moment, at least, the main obstacles to information are less political than practical.

Moreover, a considerable number of documents are being made public in monographs and particularly in scholarly journals. The latter include five that have not found it necessary to change their title since 1991: *Voprosy istorii*, once the flagship of the Soviet historical profession; *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, the sociologists' principal outlet and in the nature of things reform-minded; *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, concerned mainly with foreign policy; *Istoricheskii arkhiv* and, finally, *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* for military history. The latter takes a particularly strident 'patriotic' line, as we shall see presently.

Each of these journals as a rule contains original articles, reports of conferences or discussions, book reviews, and so on. So too do several former Soviet journals whose titles have undergone slight change to reflect current political realities: *Istoriia SSSR*, now *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, concerns itself, as its name suggests, with domestic Russian history (of all periods), while *Sovetskie arkhivy* has become *Otechestvennye arkhivy*. (The former party journal *Kommunist* now appears as *Svobodnaia mysl'* but contains little of historical interest; I have not yet seen either *Rossiiia i sovremennyi mir* or *Rossiiia v XX veke*.) Popular in character, but no less useful for that, is the bi-monthly *Istochnik*, a

historical supplement to the periodical *Rodina*; since the beginning of 1995 it has produced a supplement of its own, the *Vestnik arkhiva Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii*. Less frequent in appearance, but perhaps most valuable of all, are the volumes in the series *Neizvestnaia Rossiia: XX vek*, edited by V.A. Kozlov and others. The four volumes that have appeared at the time of writing contain longer pieces of up to a hundred pages. Apart from these, there are of course several general-interest and cultural periodicals which from time to time contain material on, for example, censorship or the persecution of intellectuals. Among these one should single out for special mention *De visu*,<sup>11</sup> which focuses on literary history from the 1890s to the 1930s.

In passing one may note that documentary publications in these journals often bear an attention-getting title that reproduces a key phrase in the document or documents concerned. This seems to be a concession to commercialism that has now penetrated the once totally politicised world of historical scholarship. The editors normally supply useful annotations, especially about the posts held by persons mentioned in the text, for the average reader cannot be expected to be familiar with details of their careers. Unfortunately in such biographies the ambiguous term 'repressed' still sometimes appears, which might mean anything from loss of one's job to execution ('liquidation', in the language of the time). One may recall in this connection that 'ten years without right of correspondence' was an NKVD code-word for physical annihilation, and that until the later 1980s relatives of Stalin's victims were routinely given false information about the date or place of their decease – let alone an apology or significant compensation. We shall come back to this point below.

## Social History

Social history, which is in the forefront of Western scholarly research, especially among American 'revisionists', receives relatively little attention from their former Soviet *confrères*. This is partly because they have yet to develop the appropriate methodologies (sociology was a banned subject in the USSR until the late 1960s, and even then was looked at askance by hard-liners in the party apparatus), partly because critically-minded historians who have themselves lived through the



totalitarian experience are understandably concerned with the system's political and juridical aspects and regard social history as secondary; and partly because they are more distrustful of official statistics than some indulgent Westerners. That Russian historians are capable of excellent work in this domain is clear from a study by N.B. Lebina of social deviance in Leningrad during the 1920s and 1930s. She makes the valid point that the authorities' efforts to cope with 'hooliganism', crime, alcohol abuse and other problems were vitiated by an increasing proneness to treat them as indications of political deviance, and so to apply crude repressive measures instead of constructive remedies.<sup>12</sup> In a similar spirit, S.V. Zhuravlev and V.S. Tiazhel'nikova apply methods of quantitative analysis in an effort to establish a profile of foreign residents in the USSR in the 1930s. Taking as their sample excursionists on the Volga in 1933–34, they examine their social and national origin, previous occupations – and their fate during the purges; however, the size of the sample seems too small for general conclusions to be drawn.<sup>13</sup>

All social studies depend on reliable demographic information. Following the publication in 1991 of the basic data of the (suppressed!) 1937 Census, we now have equivalent figures for its successor of 1939.<sup>14</sup> Works in this field include several useful collections of essays.<sup>15</sup> The first of these volumes ranges in chronological scope from the First World War to the 1950s. Notable are articles by V.B. Zhiromskaia on the size of the Soviet population in 1939, I.N. Kiselev on the rate of natural increase in the 1930s, and O.M. Verbitskaia on changes in the composition of the peasant family. N.A. Aralovets, who writes on historiographical treatment of the heavy population losses during the First Five Year Plan era, has since reproduced her arguments elsewhere. She offers a regional breakdown of excess deaths from famine and also among peasants deported as 'special settlers'.<sup>16</sup>

During the Gorbachev era several economists, notably G.I. Khanin, questioned the veracity of Soviet statistics on economic output, productivity, national income and the like. Khanin has since analysed Western estimates in a book published in Novosibirsk, the seat of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Siberian Branch, where so much good work was done by progressive scholars during the 'era of stagnation'.<sup>17</sup> At first sight it seems a little strange that this topic should not have aroused greater interest among historians. Perhaps this is because such studies

are necessarily technical and somewhat dry. Another reason may be scholarly compartmentalisation, plus the fact that those skilled in sophisticated econometric techniques are too busy wrestling with present-day problems. Nevertheless, it cannot be long before progress is made in this field, too, by Russian writers, who can draw on much Western expertise in the field.

One minor aspect of the country's economic life treated in recent documentary publications is the public reaction to adverse living conditions. Stalin's police, like its forerunners (and its present-day successor?), was in the habit of compiling, for perusal by the mighty, digests (*svodki*) of what people said, based on reports submitted by secret informers (*seksoty*), correspondence intercepted in the mail, and – eventually – eavesdropping devices.<sup>18</sup> It goes without saying that such evidence is suspect for having been put together in such a way as to contain a previously agreed 'dosage' of good and bad news. Even so, it is worth knowing that, for example, in the spring of 1952, after one of the annual reductions in consumer goods prices, a Moscow housewife named Kaldobskaia wrote, in a letter to a friend in the provinces, that 'the whole business is pure fiction'. The authorities, she averred, would recoup the loss of revenue in some other way, such as by deducting from wages obligatory subscriptions to state bonds.<sup>19</sup>

A topic from the late Stalin era that has lately received a fair amount of attention from Russian writers is the post-war famine. As in 1933–34, its existence was not publicly acknowledged at the time. The first study, by I.M. Volkov in 1991, dealt mainly with the southern regions of Moldova and Ukraine. It has since become clear that many other parts of European Russia were afflicted, and that food shortages continued into 1949. According to V.F. Zima, some ten million persons suffered hunger. He gives data on mortality rates in various regions and discusses the various epidemics that resulted as well as the government's laggard relief efforts, slightly mitigated by aid from UNRRA. All too often, the authorities adopted a punitive policy against fugitives and alleged 'idlers' or 'speculators', who were sent into exile *en masse*: he offers a total figure of 33,266. This was the time when Stalin insisted on re-collectivising land which peasants had repossessed during or after the war and had cultivated on an individual basis. Livestock and crops, too, were confiscated. Such arbitrary actions, accompanied by much administrative abuse, reduced the peasants to desperation and

deprived them of any incentive to try to better their lot by their own efforts.<sup>20</sup> Much the same picture emerges from the studies of another prolific scholar, V.P. Popov, the author of a book on the post-war Russian village and also of several shorter pieces on the famine and contemporary demographic losses.<sup>21</sup>

One may hope that it will soon be possible to compare this horrifying experience with its rather better-known predecessor, a product of the initial forced collectivisation drive. This field of inquiry was first opened up during the 'Khrushchev thaw' of the early 1960s, but then the flow of information was arbitrarily cut short. Fortunately one of the most knowledgeable historians of that time, I.E. Zelenin, is still active. In a recent article he offers a comprehensive account of 'the tragic consequences of the revolution from above', which he justifiably calls a 'pseudo-socialist' policy. It engendered a veritable 'peasant war' against the urban zealots who came out to the villages and imposed their will with unheard-of brutality. The number of families deported in 1930–31 is put at 381,000, and the number of famine victims, following E.A. Osokina, at 6.7 million – data that need verification. Novel is the figure offered for those arrested under the celebrated 'seven-eight' decree (7 August 1932) for theft of 'socialist' property, such as crops: 103,000, of whom 6.2 per cent were shot. Here and elsewhere Zelenin clarifies the tactical shifts in official policy, the role of Machine-Tractor Station political departments, the catastrophic impact of collectivisation on the semi-nomadic cattle-raisers of Kazakhstan, and the extent of population drift to the towns. In a friendly exchange with R.W. Davies on the temporary liberalisation of agrarian policy in May 1933, Zelenin points out that this 'neo-NEP' was implemented 'in a Stalinist fashion', that is, with characteristic ambiguity, for it was precisely then that high delivery quotas were imposed on famine-stricken regions along with the rest.<sup>22</sup>

Scholars working in local archives can do much to illuminate what collectivisation involved on the ground. I.E. Plotnikov exploits documents from Sverdlovsk province and elsewhere in the Urals, a region where the initial drive was pressed home strongly and giant 'communes' or collective farms set up, which then witnessed an efflux of their members once pressure from on high was relaxed in the wake of Stalin's celebrated 'Dizziness from Success' article (in which he made local zealots the scapegoats for excesses that were really the

Centre's responsibility). In 1930–31 the Urals had to receive no fewer than 571,355 peasant 'settlers' deported from their homes in European Russia or Ukraine, according to OGPU figures; adding those sent to other regions – Siberia, Kazakhstan and the north, in the main – we arrive at a total of 1,636,055 individuals (V.N. Zemskov has 1.8 million), to whom must be added 25,000 Ural Cossack families and of course the convoys that arrived in later years. In the Urals, typically, nothing had been done to prepare for such an influx, as local OGPU officials frankly admitted in a report dated March 1931, so that the results were catastrophic. The 'special settlers' lacked food, winter clothing (without which one lasted only a matter of weeks!) and accommodation; those with any money found nothing to buy; party officials (named in the source) imposed inhumanly high work norms and committed abuses such as staging mock burials to intimidate potential victims, or confining large numbers or people in tiny prison huts known locally as *katalazhniki*. These conditions led to a hitherto unknown revolt in April 1931 which was put down with great ferocity.<sup>23</sup>

Such material also appears in the form of personal accounts by descendants of the survivors. Thus, M.V. Sedykh, a native of Kirsanovka, a village in Orenburg province, uses local archives to demonstrate, in a mere couple of pages, the impact on it of collectivisation. In 1928 his village had 3,505 inhabitants, no fewer than 745 of whom were deported as alleged kulaks, and fourteen sentenced to prison terms; after a wave of protests and a purge of the local administration, another eleven former 'middle peasant' families were exiled to other places in the same region; finally, the Great Terror exacted a further toll of ten persons arrested, three of whom were shot. Whether such a statistical record is typical – was this a Cossack area? – is as yet undetermined.<sup>24</sup>

Little of interest has come to light of late about policy formation during the period – or how the subjugation of the peasantry was seen by the country's leaders and planners as fitting into the general strategy of industrialisation. Indeed, the whole notion of the 'planned' or command economy is so sensitive that it is left in decent obscurity. It was known in the 1960s that the writer M.A. Sholokhov wrote to Stalin giving details of abuses of power by officials in the Veshenskii district of the Don region where he lived. Iu.G. Murin has now

published the text of their exchanges, apparently in full, from which it is clear that Sholokhov took care not to criticise the collectivisation policy *per se*.<sup>25</sup>

## Foreign Policy

Let us now shift the scene to Soviet foreign policy. The focus of historical attention, naturally enough, is on the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact and its fateful consequences, but other periods and problems have not been neglected. Academician G.N. Sevost'ianov, editor-in-chief of *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* and an Americanist by speciality, has published materials on the establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States and the agreements concluded between the two powers on debt settlements and credits. Litvinov, as is well known, stood for a fairly co-operative attitude towards the Western democracies, and while ambassador in Washington during the war had to put up with much unpleasantness from hard-liners in the Soviet establishment. After the war was over, he leaked to an American reporter his misgivings concerning the direction that Stalin's foreign policy was taking, and in 1972 his remarks were published in US official papers; they have now seen the light in his native land.<sup>26</sup>

Allocating responsibility for the outbreak of the Cold War has long been a flourishing academic pursuit in the West. Few now doubt that Stalin's imperialist ambitions, which were shared by many in the political élite, played their part in widening the rift between the wartime allies, which was basically the result of unbridgeable divergences of world-view and only secondarily to misperceptions, or to conflict over such issues as Poland or Germany.

One such area of conflict, admittedly of minor import, was Iran. N.I. Egorova has published a letter which Stalin wrote in May 1946 to the leader of the Democratic Party of (southern) Azerbaijan (DPA), D. Pishevari, defending the Soviet decision to settle the issue by compromise. There had never been a genuine revolutionary situation in the area, he argued, and the DPA had therefore been wrong to assume the contrary; it was not Moscow's fault if retreat was now on the agenda. The tone of the letter is firm but polite.<sup>27</sup> What Egorova does not consider are the circumstances in which the policy here condemned

as 'adventurist' originated: how far was it a local development and how far instigated by the 'Centre'?

Russian diplomatic historians, as might be expected, are generally cautiously indulgent towards the Soviet viewpoint on such matters. Even so, M.M. Narinskii acknowledges that in 1947 Stalin's (and Varga's!) erroneous belief that imperialism was about to collapse played a part in the eventual Soviet decision not to participate in the Marshall Plan or allow the Soviet Union's satellites to do so either. For the USSR, as he puts it frankly, the first priority was 'the establishment and consolidation of Soviet control over the countries of eastern Europe'. Stalin saw this territorial expansion as his country's principal reward from the war and therefore refused to make any concessions to Western interests, yet this forward policy brought about the formation of the very political and military bloc that he feared.<sup>28</sup> To offset the consolidation of the West, Stalin, Zhdanov and others pushed for the setting up of Cominform in September 1947, while the Polish party leadership, in particular, dragged its feet, and three years later tried, without success, to turn it into a new Comintern.<sup>29</sup>

Stalin's cynicism in foreign policy was most famously exemplified in the pact with Hitler, a matter shrouded in secrecy in the USSR until 1988–89. Thereafter, too, official spokesmen maintained that the original text of the treaty, along with its secret protocols sealing the fate of millions of east Europeans and the supplementary agreements signed in 1941, were not to be found in Soviet archives. Even A.N. Iakovlev, who did so much to advance historical *glasnost* under Gorbachev, did not know of the existence of two sealed envelopes which were discovered in 1992 in the Presidential Archive and made public on 29 October of that year.<sup>30</sup> No fresh information, however, has become available to indicate Stalin's motives. Most Western historians view him as having kept his options open until the last moment: instinctively he would have preferred a pro-German orientation, but he realised the dangers and so went along reluctantly with the 'collective security' line identified with Litvinov; only after the Western democracies' weakness became apparent at and after Munich, and particularly after the British guarantee to Poland in April 1939, did his 'reserve policy', so to speak, move to the foreground; in the last weeks before 23 August, it was not he but Hitler who, bent on invading Poland, dictated the pace and course of events.

The most authoritative Russian historian of these matters is M.I. Semiriaga,<sup>31</sup> whose views, however, do not commend themselves to the communist-nationalist right. Indeed, this issue serves as a litmus paper to distinguish historians' attitudes. In the eyes of the 'patriots' the Soviet dictator 'had no choice' but to opt for Hitler, given the Western Powers' unhelpful attitude; they also contend that the Pact's territorial provisions bought the USSR additional security – and even benefited the peoples concerned, since Soviet rule was preferable to Hitler's. A recent exposition of this argument is offered in the pages of the military-historical journal by Iu.V. Ivanov, a former ambassador, whose contribution appears under the suggestive heading 'Against Lies and Falsification'.<sup>32</sup> The 'lies' which he seeks to rebut are Polish and relate to the Soviet invasion of that country on 17 September 1939, undertaken in conformity with commitments to the Third Reich. Ivanov's arguments are not unfamiliar, yet strike one by their cynicism: Poland's defeat by the Nazi invaders rendered nugatory the 1932 Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact, so that Soviet armed intervention did not contravene international law; the USSR only took territory inhabited by eastern Slavs ('fraternal peoples'), and less land than the secret protocols had envisaged; in securing its state interests, the USSR followed others' example (that of the Poles at Teshin). One is left to speculate: and what of the Nazi precedent?! Ivanov admits that Soviet policy was not blameless, but omits to state where its culpability lies, let alone to apologise for it. It is to be hoped that such extreme views are not widely held by Russian diplomatic historians.

The security blackout also applied, of course, to the 1940 massacre of Polish officers and others in Katyn forest, a topic sufficiently familiar not to need discussion here.<sup>33</sup> The military historian Colonel-General Iu.A. Gor'kov has published Voroshilov's surprisingly self-critical report to a plenum of the party's Central Committee at the end of the Soviet-Finnish Winter War, in which he acknowledged that the military had been inadequately prepared for the conflict.<sup>34</sup> His frankness did not save him from a (temporary) demotion; nor did it include any recognition of the damage done by the bloody purge of the Red Army which he had helped to orchestrate! The other issue is the shift in Soviet propaganda necessitated by the Hitler-Stalin pact. In three fascinating articles, based on archival sources, V.A. Nevezhin illustrates its effects on press, cinema and theatre (*Die Walkyrie* instead

of *Alexander Nevskii*!). We learn that one particular newspaper, *Trud*, was used to carry pro-Allied material, in order to exert diplomatic pressure on Nazi Germany. Nevezhin concludes, sensibly enough, that the official propaganda helped to demoralise the population on the eve of Hitler's invasion.<sup>35</sup>

A great battle has been waged in the Russian media over the book *Ledokol* ('Ice-breaker'), published in 1989 by the émigré 'V. Suvorov' (pseudonym of V. Rezun), in which he represents the outbreak of hostilities in June 1941 as a German response to plans for a preventive strike by the Soviet side. This assertion rests on the offensive strategic doctrine taught to Red Army commanders and specifically on the war plan drawn up by the Soviet general staff in May 1941. Most commentators take the view that 'Suvorov's' case is not proven. Certainly, the Soviet military posture was offensive; but in June 1941 it seems that neither the quantity nor the type of forces mobilised, nor yet their dislocation, suggests that such aggressive action was planned in the weeks immediately ahead. On the contrary, the intention of the Soviet political and military leadership, naive as it now may seem, was to parry a German invasion, which it was assumed would be on a modest scale, by a counter-blow that would defeat the German armies in Poland. Such action was not envisaged before 1942 at the earliest. As is generally known, in 1941 Stalin was desperately anxious not to provoke the Germans and deliberately closed his ears to all the warnings that he received about the imminence of Operation Barbarossa.<sup>36</sup> It is conceivable, however, that in the future new information may necessitate a modification of this assessment, for the matter is still very much under debate.

The first major attempt to introduce nuances into the traditional 'patriotic' interpretation of the 'Great Fatherland War', propagated most energetically by the military-historical lobby, has been made by A. Mertsalov.<sup>37</sup> Like Western writers, he differentiates between the Stalinist regime and the population, and shows that Soviet soldiers and civilians suffered from the crimes and follies of *both* totalitarian systems, although in unequal measure. One can only welcome this long-awaited breakthrough, which seems likely to synthesise the scattered information hitherto provided on various aspects of the war. We may leave to competent specialists consideration of the material that has appeared of late on various military operations and confine



ourselves to a few matters of general interest. Thus, Iu. Khelemskii reveals the poor state of Soviet morale in the first two months of the war. On the railways alone, the military procurator reported 4,123 'counter-revolutionary acts'; of 2,524 individuals convicted, 8 per cent (204) were shot.<sup>38</sup> E.S. Seniavskaia illustrates popular morale from soldiers' letters intercepted by the political 'organs', with instances of the measures taken against those who grumbled or protested.<sup>39</sup> Other documents deal with the initiation of the 'scorched earth' policy; the Union of German Officers formed after Stalingrad; the scale of Allied Lend-Lease deliveries; and the despatch of the Anders Army to Iran in 1942.<sup>40</sup>

A good deal of material has also appeared on General Vlasov's Russian Liberation Army and other 'collaborators' – a subject that was very much taboo until the last years of the Soviet regime. Most of it is hostile in tone, as one would expect, but L. Reshin takes a more dispassionate approach. In an essay published as a 'discussion article' by the cautious editors of the literary review *Znamia*, he offers figures for the size of various units and arrives at a total of 280,000 Soviet citizens who served their government's enemies, 200,000 of them as civilians, mainly in labour battalions.<sup>41</sup> Right-wing writers take the line that for all their faults Stalin and the other war-time Soviet leaders rendered the people good service. A typical judgement is that of Gor'kov, who after detailing the dictator's arbitrary treatment of his generals and their own abuses of power (such as shooting disobedient officers without trial), concludes that 'one should not pay too much attention to this: the main thing is that the High Command staff played a tremendous role in defeating the German fascists'.<sup>42</sup>

Publication has begun of selected documents of the State Defence Committee. During its four-year existence, it took nearly ten thousand decisions, most of which bore Stalin's signature; in effect it served as a substitute Politburo and wielded unchecked power. It concerned itself in the main with mobilising the country's human and material resources, but was also responsible for some deplorable acts of bloodshed. Within a mere eight days in 1941 it ordered the NKVD to shoot nearly five thousand alleged 'counter-revolutionaries', many of them political prisoners of long standing, such as the former Left Socialist Revolutionary leader Maria Spiridonova.<sup>43</sup> As for total Soviet casualties during the war, it is now abundantly clear that many of the 8.7 million

armed forces personnel who perished did so needlessly, as a consequence of the regime's utter disregard for human life. Total population losses are now put at approximately 27–28 million (which include some victims of Stalinist repression).<sup>44</sup>

On a less morbid note, we are now getting accounts of what the war looked like from below – for instance, by soldiers in the Winter War or diarists in Moscow (V. Semenov, 1942) and in Leningrad during the blockade.<sup>45</sup> To keep a diary under Stalin was a reckless act, and so it should not come as a surprise that Semenov says nothing about politics!

### Political History

Moving on to politics in general, we may begin by drawing attention to another diarist, the minor functionary A.G. Solov'ev.<sup>46</sup> A native of Tver' (Kalinin), he taught political economy for a time in Moscow, wrote propaganda tracts, and worked as a librarian. Although he was rash enough to express in writing his misgivings about the Stalin cult as early as 1929, he managed to survive the Terror and died a natural death in 1979 – by which time he may well have rewritten some passages to reflect later political orthodoxy, so reducing his diary's value as a source. What is significant about these jottings is not just Solov'ev's retailing of high-level gossip – he had episodic contact with such Old Bolshevik ladies as Ul'ianova, Krupskaja and Kollontai, as well as with Lunacharskii, Litvinov and others – but his depiction of the political and intellectual compromises which he himself made in order to stay alive. Had we a few dozen such sources, we could build up a much richer picture than is available today of the inner life of the *nomenklaturist*.

From the depths of Soviet society we have the diary kept by an old-age pensioner from Poltava named E.N. Nikolaev. At one time a skilled worker, he held liberal constitutionalist views and was also an Orthodox believer. He was outspoken in condemning the regime for its abuses of human rights: 'a fellow just disappears and no one knows where he has been taken', he wrote. When he was arrested in 1937 his diary was confiscated and used in evidence against him; he was, of course, shot.<sup>47</sup> Researchers have also begun to use police *svodki* in order to reconstruct the population's view of the system. For example,

in the winter of 1945–46, so-called ‘hooligan acts’ were perpetrated at Iaroslavl’, Sverdlovsk, Ekaterinburg and elsewhere during routine elections to the Supreme Soviet. Some of those present at meetings uttered provocative remarks and even distributed tracts calling for genuine democratic procedures to be followed.<sup>48</sup> This is evidence of amorphous, unorganised dissent, most of which was probably just normal grumbling rather than politically-motivated opposition – but one would need to examine whole series of such reports to be sure.

Scarcely any interest is taken nowadays by Russian scholars in the way the Soviet system functioned, in such matters as the composition of party membership, clientelism, the powers and privileges of the *nomenklatura* and so on, which for decades formed the staple of Western sovietology. Even the legal system is neglected except in so far as it was part of the system of repression that culminated in the Terror.<sup>49</sup> There are readily understandable psychological and political reasons for this bias. We should rather be grateful for all the new material that helps Western researchers to clarify such much-disputed questions as the number of Stalin’s victims or the size of the GULag.<sup>50</sup>

Much work of value on this is now being done in local archives which can eventually serve as a means of verifying the composite data prepared by senior NKVD functionaries, and also in the excavation of mass burial sites.<sup>51</sup> We shall probably never discover the number of those executed, often without trial, because these summary killings will have been under-reported in official sources. The same applies to mortality in the GULag, for which we now have (unverified) ‘official’ annual totals. Of the local studies, we may mention a volume compiled in Nizhnii-Novgorod and published in a very small print run; the Kazan’ historian A.L. Litvin’s researches in the archives of nearby Tatarstan; and a similar study by I.N. Kuznetsov of Tomsk University of the repressions in Western Siberia.<sup>52</sup>

As has long been appreciated, the show trials of 1936–38 were preceded by several pseudo-judicial ‘performances’ of more limited scope. Documents on some of them were published in the *perestroika* era, notably in *Izvestiia TsK*. Continuing this tradition, publication has begun of the proceedings of the case instituted against several noted members of the Academy of Sciences in 1929.<sup>53</sup> Little seems to have been said as yet of the Menshevik trial of 1931. Not much can be expected on the ‘high politics’ of the following years, so long

afterwards, and in view of the fact that many of the most important decisions were taken orally.<sup>54</sup> Murin, who has studied the original record of the trial of Bukharin and his 'accomplices', shows that it differs in some minor particulars from the text as published at the time, and that none other than Stalin himself made these emendations – further testimony to the Leader's role in 'framing' the accused, which historians of the 'revisionist' school have doubted.<sup>55</sup> We now also know for certain, from none other than A.N. Iakovlev, that subordinate NKVD agencies were sometimes allotted quotas ('control figures') for arrests – and perhaps executions, too? On 30 July 1937 Stalin, Molotov and Kaganovich ordered the punishment of 258,950 individuals 'in categories 1 and 2', the first of which meant death.<sup>56</sup> This order has to be seen in the context of the practice of shooting people whose names were on lists submitted to the leadership by the NKVD (at the former's behest), mentioned by Khrushchev in his 1956 'secret' speech.

One important source on the politics of the Terror is the proceedings of the Central Committee plenum held in February–March 1937, which have been serialised in successive issues of *Voprosy istorii*.<sup>57</sup> They show that the party's élite was driven to distraction by pressure from above to identify alleged saboteurs and counter-revolutionaries, so creating a climate conducive to indiscriminate delation. It is to be hoped that it will soon be followed by the minutes of the Central Committee's subsequent meeting in June 1937, at which the Old Bolshevik Patnitskii questioned the necessity of the Terror, whereupon he was promptly denounced as a 'Trotskyist' and later shot. We also now have the full text of the so-called 'Shvern timer commission' report, compiled in 1963 for the party leadership under Khrushchev, which gives lower figures for the number of arrests and executions than were unearthed by the 'Iakovlev commission' called into being by Gorbachev.<sup>58</sup>

Another approach to the subject is to trace the fate of various categories of victims, or of course individuals. The careers of a number of writers and other intellectuals have been treated in literary or scientific journals which lie outside our purview here.<sup>59</sup> There is, of course, much less of such material on ordinary citizens. As regards members of the armed forces, it is suggestive that some recent material takes a line critical of Marshal Tukhachevskii and other prominent victims of the Leader's paranoia. It has also been argued that not all the 39,000 or so officers 'repressed' at this time were put to death, as some

writers who use this vague term have implied. The figures apparently show a total of 3,924 such persons sentenced (by judicial and extra-judicial organs) for 'counter-revolutionary' (political) offences between 1938 and 1940, 692 of whom were executed (annoyingly, the latter figure excludes the year 1937!). Arrests of servicemen are said to have peaked in 1940 in connection with the Winter War.<sup>60</sup>

The Terror fell with particular force on the non-Russian nationalities of the USSR, particularly after 1939. N.F. Bugai, one of the leading authorities in this domain, refers to two general multi-volume works on this subject, but it has not been possible to evaluate them.<sup>61</sup> Bugai heads a study group in the Academy of Sciences' Institute of History on the history of inter-ethnic relations in Russia. In another work, Bugai publishes 333 official documents on the deportation of various national groups, including Germans, Balts, (western) Ukrainians, north Caucasians and so on.<sup>62</sup> Of particular importance, since they were among the first to suffer this fate, are the Koreans, who were not suspected of disloyalty, but were simply moved to the interior in order to improve security in a sensitive frontier region – 172,000 of them, in 124 overcrowded and inadequately heated special trains; over three thousand others resident in the Far East, plus three thousand Chinese, were arrested and presumably ended up in the GULag.<sup>63</sup> Most of the documents, typically, deal with organisational and economic aspects of this police operation: for example, the farms which the deportees had to leave behind in such haste were ruined, and consequently those who moved in to take their place could not run them efficiently; yet the whole scheme depended on their repaying the state for its expenses. Most significantly of all, in practice the status of the deported Korean 'special settlers' deteriorated so that they became indistinguishable from captives of other nations sent into exile for alleged political offences or unreliability. In effect, this operation served as a pilot project for 'ethnic cleansing' on a still greater scale before, during and after the war: the inhabitants of the western territories annexed in 1939–40, the Germans from 1941, followed by north Caucasians, Kalmyks and Crimean Tatars; the post-war deportees included other national groups located in border regions.<sup>64</sup>

We have not yet mentioned the most sensitive national group, the Jews, whom in 1952 Stalin would gladly have sent east, too! They escaped this fate, but Bugai gives details of the population transfers

connected with the pre-war Birobidzhan project, the arrival of Jewish refugees from Poland after 1939 (169,000 applications for asylum officially approved), and the despatch of 228,000 Jews to Poland after the war.<sup>65</sup> As for anti-Semitism in general, the topic of the post-war 'anti-cosmopolitan' campaign is treated in an article by G.V. Kostyrchenko, and at greater length in a book by Aleksandr Borshchagovskii with the sensational title *Blood Accusation: A Documentary Tale*.<sup>66</sup> Although this popular work is put together in a way that makes the story hard to follow, it is at least based on a reading of the fifty-volume record of the investigation and trial in 1948 of the members of the war-time Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Borshchagovskii sees Malenkov as responsible for the initiation of this case, and Kostyrchenko stresses Shepilov's role, whereas Iakovlev emphasises that played by Suslov. Stalin was, of course, ultimately responsible – partly, it seems for reasons that had something to do with tensions within his own family. According to Robert Conquest, the full text of the trial proceedings has since been published.<sup>67</sup>

What happened to the 'special settlers' and camp inmates once they reached their destinations? Here, too, recent sources convey scattered information about their material lot, the nature of the work assigned (on which the location of camps and settlements principally depended), the age and sex ratio, national composition, the value of the goods they produced, and so on.<sup>68</sup> There are fresh details on the size of the Gulag's administrative staff.<sup>69</sup> Since this material is mostly of official origin, one cannot expect to learn much about the inmates' psychological reactions to the hardships and humiliations to which they were subjected; here the interested reader will naturally still turn first to Solzhenitsyn's epic, *The Gulag Archipelago*. Several of his informants, along with other survivors, have since published their recollections, some of them in works published in the West.<sup>70</sup> S.S. Vilenskii has produced a compilation on active and passive resistance in the Gulag, and A.I. Kokurin reproduces documents on the official response to the principal insurrections staged by *zeks* (prisoners) after Stalin's death.<sup>71</sup> The rehabilitation of the victims lies outside our time-frame, but we may note in passing several works devoted to this subject.<sup>72</sup>

As this survey suggests, recent Russian writing on the Stalin era has been concerned mainly with particulars. This is perhaps as it should

be: after all, we need to know the facts before we can construct theories. The principal drawback of much Western sovietology was that the lack of first-hand knowledge led to excessive theorising and polemic.

The term 'totalitarianism' has been taken over by some contemporary Russian writers from the West, perhaps a little uncritically – although Iu.V. Igritskii has attempted a fresh definition of its salient characteristics, and it is not outsiders but those who lived under the Soviet system who are best qualified to decide what concept best describes it.<sup>73</sup> As in Germany after the defeat of the Third Reich, it will take a generation or so before historians (and still longer the general public) in Russia can 'come to terms' with the malevolent aspects of their country's recent past. M. Ferretti is not alone in criticising the post-Soviet intelligentsia for evading its responsibilities in this respect.<sup>74</sup> This is perhaps too severe a judgement, as the foregoing will have shown. That political criteria still loom large in forming people's historical outlook is regrettable, but the phenomenon is not, after all, confined to the former Soviet Union. What we need most of all at present is a better international effort to compile an inventory of all writing on the subject, east and west, so as to build up a bibliographic base for future studies in a spirit of mutual respect.<sup>75</sup>

## Notes

### *Abbreviations of titles of Russian periodicals:*

IA	<i>Istoricheskii arkhiv</i>
Ist.	<i>Istochnik</i>
NNI	<i>Novaia i noveishaia istoriia</i>
NR	<i>Neizvestnaia Rossiia: XX vek</i>
OA	<i>Otechestvennye arkhivy</i>
OI	<i>Otechestvennaia istoriia</i>
SOI	<i>Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia</i>
VI	<i>Voprosy istorii</i>
VIZh	<i>Voenna-istoricheskii zhurnal</i>

1. John Keep, 'Die sowjetische Geschichtswissenschaft der "Perestrojka". Anfänge einer Aufarbeitung der jüngsten Vergangenheit', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, Vol. 42 (1992), pp. 100–116; Jörg Baberowski, 'Wandel und Terror: die Sowjetunion unter Stalin 1928–1941: ein Literaturbericht', *Jahrbücher für*

- Geschichte Osteuropas*, Vol. 43 (1995), pp. 97–129; cf. M. Sandle, 'New Directions, New Approaches, Old Issues: Recent Writings on Soviet History', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 38 (1995), pp. 231–48.
2. A. Nekrich, *Entsage der Angst* (Frankfurt, Berlin and Vienna, 1983), pp. 251ff. (first published as *Otreshis' ot strakha: vospominaniia istorika* (London, 1979).
  3. M. Confino, 'Present Events and the Representation of the Past: Some Current Problems in Russian Historical Writing', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, Vol. 35 (1994), p. 842.
  4. OA, 1992, No. 6, pp. 3ff.; 1993, No. 1, pp. 3ff; 1993, No. 5, pp. 3f.
  5. This presumably includes the FSKRRF, since both are headed by General (of police!) A.A. Kraiushkin. The FSKRRF now has a renamed archive, TsAFSKRF.
  6. OA, 1992, No. 3, p. 3.
  7. *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 March 1995.
  8. J. Foitzik, 'Zur Situation in den Moskauer Archiven', *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung*, 1993, No. 1 p. 299.
  9. V.A. Kozlov and S.V. Mironenko (eds), *Arkhiv noveishei istorii Rossii*, Tom I, 'Osobaia papka' I.V. Stalina. *Iz materialov NKVD–MVD SSSR 1944–1953 gg. Katalog dokumentov* (Moscow, 1994); Tom II. 'Osobaia papka' V.M. Molotova (Moscow, 1994). Reviewed (Vol. I only) in *Osteuropa*, 1995, No. 4, pp. 365–8, and (both volumes) in *OI*, 1996, No. 1, pp. 187–9.
  10. Rosarkhiv and Hoover Institution, *Archives of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet State. Catalogue of Finding Aids and Documents*, 1st edn (Moscow and Stanford, CA, 1995); Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki, *Putevoditel'*, Tom I, *Spravochnik fondov*, edited by W. Chase, S.V. Prasolova et al. (Moscow, 1994), announced in *International Newsletter of Historical Studies on Comintern, Communism and Stalinism* (Aachen), 1995, No. 1, p. 391. A guide to RTsKhIDNI has been prepared by J. Arch Getty and V.P. Kozlov. See also M. David-Fox and D. Hoffmann, 'The Politburo Protocols, 1919–40', *Russian Review*, Vol. 55 (1996), pp. 99–103.
  11. *De visu: ezheimesiachnyi istoriko-literaturnyi i bibliograficheskii zhurnal*, edited by A. Galushkin (Moscow, 1993–).
  12. N.B. Leбина, 'Tenevye storony zhizni sovetskogo goroda 20–30-kh gg.', VI, 1994, No. 2, pp. 30–42; see also the valuable studies of supply policy by E.A. Osokina, *Ierarkhiia potrebleniia: o zhizni liudei v usloviakh stalinskogo snabzheniia 1928–1935 gg.* (Moscow, 1993); 'Za zerkal'noi dver'iu Torgsina', *OI*, 1995, No. 2, pp. 86–104. On home brewing in the village, see K.B. Litvak, in *OI*, 1992, No. 4, pp. 74–88.
  13. S.V. Zhuravlev and V.S. Tiazhel'nikova, 'Inostrannaia koloniia v Sovetskoi Rossii v 1920–1930-e gg. ...', *OI*, 1994, No. 1, pp. 179–89.
  14. *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1939 g.: osnovnye itogi* (Moscow, 1992). The memoirs of a leading statistician, M.V. Kurman, who spent thirteen years in the Gulag, some of them in Kolyma, are published with an introduction by A. Vishnevskii in *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, Vol. 34 (1993), pp. 577–630.
  15. Iu.A. Poliakov et al. (eds), *Naselenie Rossii v 1920–1950-e gg.: chislennost', poteri, migratsii. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Moscow, 1994); E.M. Andreev, L.E. Darskii and T.L. Khar'kova, *Naselenie Sovetskogo Soiuza, 1922–1991* (Moscow, 1993);



- Istoricheskaia demografiia: novye podkhody, metody, istochniki* (editor not indicated; Moscow, 1992). One hopes that the Soviet practice of 'de-personalising' works by omitting the editors' names will soon be abandoned.
16. N.A. Aralovets, 'Poteri naseleniia sovetskogo obshchestva v 1930-e gg.: problemy, istochniki, metody izucheniia v otechestvennoi istoriografii', *OI*, 1995, No. 1, pp. 135–46.
  17. G.I. Khanin, *Sovetskii ekonomicheskii rost: analiz zapadnykh otsenok* (Novosibirsk, 1993).
  18. The value of this evidence is stressed by A. Werth, 'Une source inédite: les "svodki" de la Tcheka-OGPU', *Revue des études slaves*, Vol. 66 (1994), pp. 17–27; see also his edition, with G. Moulec, of *Rapports secrets soviétiques: la société russe dans les documents confidentiels, 1921–1991: recueil de pièces d'archives ...* (Paris, 1994).
  19. A. Kraiushkin and N.V. Teptsov, 'Kak snizhali tseny v kontse 40-kh–nach. 50-kh gg. i chto ob etom govoril narod', *NR*, 1992, No. 2, pp. 282–96.
  20. V.F. Zima, 'Golod v Rossii 1946–1947 gg.', *OI*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 32–52; idem, "'Vtoroe raskulachivanie": agrarnaia politika kontsa 40-kh–nach. 50-kh gg.', *OI*, 1994, No. 3, pp. 109–25.
  21. V.P. Popov (ed.), *Rossiiskaia derevnia posle voyny, iun' 1945–mart 1953 g.: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, 1993); idem, 'Golod i gosudarstvennaia politika, 1946–1947 gg.', *OA*, 1992, No. 6, pp. 36–59; idem, 'Prichiny sokrashcheniia chislennosti naseleniia RSFSR posle Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny', *SOI*, 1994, No. 10, pp. 76–94; idem., 'Eshche raz o poslevoennom golode', *OA*, 1994, No. 4, pp. 82–7 (where he shows that Stalin was well informed about the situation).
  22. I.E. Zelenin, "'Revoliutsiia sverkh": zavershenie i tragicheskie posledstviia', *VI*, 1994, No. 10, pp. 28–42; idem., 'Politodtely MTS – prodolzhenie "chrezvychaishchiny" (1933–1934 gg.)', *OI*, 1992, No. 6, pp. 42–61; idem, 'Kollektivizatsiia i edinolichnik: 1933–ii—I-aia polovina 1935 g.', *OI*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 35–55; idem, 'Byl li kolkhoznyi neo-NEP?', *OI*, 1994, No. 2, pp. 105–21. For a survey of agrarian policy, see O.M. Verbitskaia, *Rossiiskoe krest'ianstvo ot Stalina k Khrushchevu* (Moscow, 1992). A French edition of related documents is A. Graziosi, 'Collectivisation, révoltes paysannes et politiques gouvernementales à travers les rapports du GPU d'Ukraine de février-mars 1930', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, Vol. 35 (1994), pp. 437–72 (documents, pp. 473–672).
  23. I.E. Plotnikov, 'O tempakh i formakh kollektivizatsii na Urale', *OI*, 1994, No. 3, pp. 77–91; idem, 'Kak likvidirovali kulachestvo na Urale', *OI*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 159–67; idem (ed.), 'Ssylka krest'ian na Ural v 1930-e gg.: dokumenty iz arkhivov', *OI*, 1995, No. 1, pp. 160–79. For samples of protests, appeals and letters by peasant settlers, see the works by Zemskov cited in note 64 below; see also N.V. Teptsov (ed.), 'Ssyl'nye muzhiki: pravda o spetsposelentsakh', *NR*, 1992, No. 1, pp. 184–267; idem and N.D. Nokhomovich, 'Raskulachivali dazhe inostrantsev', *NR*, 1992, No. 2, pp. 324–37.
  24. M.V. Sedykh, 'Tragicheskaiia uchast' krest'ian sela Kirsanovka v 30-e gody', *VI*, 1994, No. 9, pp. 189–90. M.A. Smirnov and S.B. Vlasov, 'Tiumenskaia derevnia v period kollektivizatsii', *OA*, 1993, No. 6, pp. 75–80, print a letter to the local party secretary, dated 29 March 1930, protesting at collectivisation.

25. Iu.G. Murin (ed.), 'Sholokhov i Stalin: perepiska nachala 30-kh gg.', VI, 1994, No. 3, pp. 3–25. In the later 1930s the writer took a more resolute stance, blaming the NKVD for the arrest and maltreatment of innocent colleagues; in 1936 he was himself apparently the target of an assassination attempt: idem, "'Vokrug menia vse eshche pletut chernuiu pautinu ...": pis'ma M.A. Sholokhova I.V. Stalinu, 1937–1950', *Ist.*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 4–19.
26. G.N. Sevost'ianov, 'Missiia M.M. Litvinova v Vashington v 1933: novye materialy', *NNI*, 1994, No. 3, pp. 148–75; idem, 'Sud'ba soglasheniia Ruzvel't–Litvinov o dolgakh i kreditakh 1934–5 gg.: novye dokumenty', *NNI*, 1995, No. 2, pp. 115–34; 'M.M. Litvinov o mezhdunarodnoi situatsii i vneshnei politike SSSR posle vtoroi mirovoi voiny', *OI*, 1992, No. 1, pp. 161–4.
27. N.I. Egorova, "'Iranskii krizis" 1945–1946 gg.: po rassekrechennym sekretnym dokumentam', *NNI*, 1994, No. 3, pp. 24–42.
28. M.M. Narinskii, 'SSSR i plan Marshalla: po materialam APRF', *NNI*, 1993, No. 2, pp. 11–19; see also idem, 'Soviet Foreign Policy and the Origins of the Cold War', in G. Gorodetsky (ed.), *Soviet Foreign Policy 1919–1991: A Retrospective* (London, 1994), pp. 105–10.
29. L.Ia. Gibianskii, 'Kak voznik Kominform: po novym arkhivnym materialam', *NNI*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 131–52; G.M. Adibekov, 'Popytka kominternizatsii Kominforma v 1950g.: po novym arkhivnykh materialam', *NNI*, 1994, Nos 4–5, pp. 51–66.
30. On their discovery, see L. Bezymensky, 'The Secret Protocols of 1939 as a Problem of Soviet Historiography', in Gorodetsky (ed.), *Soviet Foreign Policy*, pp. 75–85. The relevant files, numbers 34 and 35, had been in the charge of the CPSU CC's General Department since 1952 and had been opened in 1959, 1975, 1979 and 1987 for perusal by the leaders of the day – although Gorbachev denied knowledge of the contents. V.M. Osin points out (*OA*, 1992, No. 6, p. 70) that the documents included a hitherto unknown Soviet–German agreement dated 10 January 1941 on an exchange of Lithuanian territory for 7.5 million dollars in gold: for the Russian text, see M.I. Semiriaga (contrib.), 'Sekretnye dokumenty iz osobykh papok', *VI*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 3–22; 'Sovetsko-germanskii dokumenty 1939–1941 gg.: iz arkhiva TsK KPSS', *NNI*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 83–95.
31. M.I. Semiriaga, *Tainy stalinskoi diplomatii, 1939–1941 gg.* (Moscow, 1992); see also the review in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Vol. 42 (1994), p. 314.
32. Iu.V. Ivanov, 'Osvoboditel'nyi pokhod ili agressiia?', *VIZh*, 1994, No. 9, pp. 82–6.
33. Semiriaga, 'Sekretnye dokumenty iz osobykh papok', was apparently the first to reveal that the total number of victims was 21,857. Robert Conquest (*Times Literary Supplement*, 3 March 1995) reports the recent publication of a commendable study by N. Lebedeva entitled *Katyn': prestuplenie protiv chelovechestva* (Moscow). See also N.S. Raiskii, 'II-aia mirovaia voina i sud'by pol'skikh voennoplennykh', *OI*, 1995, No. 4, pp. 136–44.
34. Iu.A. Gor'kov, 'Uroki voiny s Finliandiei: neopublikovannyi doklad narkoma oborony SSSR K.E. Voroshilova na plenum TsK VKP(b) 28 marta 1940 g.', *NNI*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 100–122.
35. V.A. Nevezhin, 'Sovetskaia politika i kul'turnye sviazi s Germaniei, 1939–1941

- gg.', *OI*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 18–34; idem, 'Metamorfozy sovetskoi propagandy v 1939–1941 gg.', *VI*, 1994, No. 8, pp. 164–71; idem, 'Rech' Stalina 5 maia 1941 g. i apologiia nastupatel'noi voiny', *OI*, 1995, No. 2, pp. 54–69.
36. V. Danilov, 'Gotovil li General'nyi shtab Krasnoi Armii uprezhdaishchii udar po Germanii?', *Segodnia*, 28 September 1993; Iu.A. Gor'kov, 'Gotovil li Stalin uprezhdaishchii udar protiv Gitlera v 1941 g.?', *NNI*, 1993, No. 3, pp. 29–45; M.I. Mel'tukhov, 'Spory vokrug 1941 g.: opyt kriticheskogo osmysleniia odnoi diskussii', *OI*, 1994, No. 3, pp. 3–22; idem, 'Ideologicheskie dokumenty maia–iunia 1941 g. O sobytiakh Vtoroi mirovoi voiny', *OI*, 1995, No. 2, pp. 70–85 (a commentary on the last article by Nevezhin cited in note 35 above); General M.A. Gareev, 'Eshche raz k voprosu: gotovil li Stalin preventivnyi udar v 1942 g.?', *NNI*, 1994, No. 2, pp. 198–202. See also, more recently, V.D. Danilov and A.A. Pechenkin's articles in a discussion in *OI*, 1995, No. 3, pp. 33–58. It should be stressed that Mel'tukhov adheres to a date in 1941 for the offensive. On the general staff exercise in December 1940, see P.N. Bobylev, 'Repetitsiia katastrofy', *VIZh*, 1993, No. 6, pp. 10–16. A.G. Pavlov defends the achievements of the intelligence services in 'Sovetskaia voennaia razvedka nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', *NNI*, 1995, No. 1, pp. 49–61. See also I. Bunich, *Operatsiia 'Groza' ili oshibka v tret'em znake: istoricheskaiia khronika* (St. Petersburg, 1994).
  37. A.N. Mertsalov and L.A. Mertsalova, *Stalinizm i voina: iz neprochitannykh stranits istorii, 1930–e–1990–e gg.* (Moscow, 1994).
  38. Iu. Khelemskii (ed.), 'Rost kolichestva osuzhdennykh budet ochevidnym', *Ist.*, 1994, No. 5, pp. 107–12. On the situation in the rear, see an interview given by General A.V. Khrulev, presented by G.A. Kumanev in *NNI*, 1995, No. 2, pp. 65–87.
  39. E.S. Seniavskaia, 'Novye shtrikhi k rabote politorganov v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', *OA*, 1992, No. 1, pp. 97–106.
  40. S.A. Mel'chin (ed.), "'Vygnat' nemetskh zakhvatchikov ... na kholod v pole." Prikaz Stavki Verkhovnogo Glavnogo Komandovaniia 17 noiabria 1941 g.', *IA*, 1993, No. 3, pp. 148–50; L.E. Reshin (ed.), "'Soiuz nemetskh ofitserov": tainy vtoroi mirovoi voiny', *Ist.*, 1993, No. 0, pp. 86–106; A.S. Orlov and V.P. Kozanov, 'Lend-liz: vzgliad cherez polveka', *NNI*, 1994, No. 3, pp. 76–94; 'Stalin, Beriia i sud'by armii Andersa v 1941–2 gg.: iz rassekrechennykh arkhivov', *NNI*, 1993, No. 2, pp. 59–90. According to these figures, 69,917 Polish citizens were despatched, including 41,103 military personnel; Western sources give a higher figure of about 78,000 military and 37,000 civilians; E. Bacon, *The Gulag at War: Stalin's Forced Labour System in the Light of the Archives* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 104 makes it clear that 43,000 Poles were released from the GULag.
  41. L.E. Reshin, 'Kollaboratsionisty i zhertvy rezhima', *Znamia*, 1994, No. 8, pp. 158–79, with a postscript by G. Vladimov, pp. 180ff.; see also L.E. Reshin and V.S. Stepanov, 'Sud'by general'skie', a continuing series of articles in *VIZh*, 1992–93; there is said to be a book on this subject by S. Kudriashev (Moscow, 1994).
  42. Iu.A. Gor'kov, 'I.V. Stalin i Stavka VGK', *VIZh*, 1995, No. 3, pp. 20–25.
  43. S.A. Mel'chin et al. (eds), 'Zharkoe leto 41 g.: dokumenty GKO i Stavki perioda

- Smolenskogo srazheniia, iul'—sentiabr' 1941 g.', *IA*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 45–67; P.N. Knyshevskii, 'Gosudarstvennyi komitet oborony: metody mobilizatsii trudovykh rezervov', *VI*, 1994, No. 2, pp. 43–52; A.A. Pechenkin, 'Gosudarstvennyi komitet oborony v 1941 g.', *OI*, 1994, Nos 4–5, pp. 126–42; General A.M. Gareev, 'O neudachnykh nastupatel'nykh operatsiakh Sovetskikh voisk v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine: po neopublikovannym dokumentam GKO', *NNI*, 1994, No. 1, pp. 3–29.
44. G.F. Krivosheev et al. (eds), *Grif sekretnosti sniat: poteri vooruzhennykh sil SSSR v voynakh, boevykh deistviakh i voennykh konfliktakh: statisticheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow, 1992); see also Z. Vodop'ianova et al. (eds), 'Sformirovalos' mnenie, chto poteri sostavili 20 millionov chelovek', *Ist.*, 1994, No. 5, pp. 87–95 (on the publication of these figures after 1988).
  45. V. Savina (ed.), "'Prodolzhaem prodvigat'sia v glub bezuiutnoi strany ...'", *Ist.*, 1993, No. 3, pp. 29–44; Z. Vodop'ianova and A.A. Kurnosov (eds), 'Zapiski moskvicha, osen' 1942 g.', *IA*, 1993, No. 2, pp. 46–57; N. Gorshkov, *Siloiu sveta v polsvechi: blokadnyi dnevniki, naidennyi cherez 50 let v sekretnykh arkhivov KGB* (St. Petersburg, 1993).
  46. N. Zelov (ed.), 'Tetradi krasnogo professora (1912–1941 gg.)', *NR*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 140–228.
  47. V. Goncharov (ed.), "'Ischez chelovek i net ego, kuda devalsia – nikto ne znaet": iz konfiskovannogo dnevnika', *Ist.*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 46–62.
  48. V. Kozlov (ed.), "'Svergnut' vlast' nespravedlivosti ...": svodka doneseni mestnykh organov NKVD ob antisovetskikh proiavleniakh ... dekabr' 1945—ianvar' 1946 g.', *NR*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 468–75. See also V. Lazarev (ed.), 'Posledniaia bolezn' Stalina: iz otchetov MVD SSSR o nastroieniakh v armii vesnoi 1953 g.', *NR*, 1992, No. 2, pp. 253–8, for soldiers' reactions to news of Stalin's fatal illness.
  49. *Sbornik zakonodatel'nykh i normativnykh aktov o repressiakh i reabilitatsiakh zhertv politicheskoi repressii* (Moscow, 1993) includes a few documents not previously published or made generally available.
  50. This debate cannot be examined here. Fundamental are now Bacon, *The Gulag at War*, and J. Arch Getty, Gábor T. Rittersporn and V.N. Zemskov, 'Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-war Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 98 (1993), pp. 1017–49, with correspondence in *ibid.*, Vol. 99 (1994), pp. 1038–41; both studies were founded on a necessarily somewhat hasty examination of central NKVD records.
  51. V. Tikhanova (ed.), *Rassrel'nye spiski*, fasc. I: *Donskoe kladbishche, 1934–40* (Moscow, 1993), contains brief biographies of more than 670 persons who were executed and buried in the Moscow cemetery named in the title; the book was sponsored by the organisation 'Memorial'.
  52. A.P. Aref'ev, V.A. Kazakov and V.V. Smirnov (eds), *Zabveniiu ne podlezhit'. O repressiakh 30-kh—nach. 50-kh gg. v Nizhegorodskoi oblasti*, Book I (Nizhnii Novgorod, 1993); see also the review by V.N. Okorokov in *OA*, 1993, No. 4, p. 114. The value of A.L. Litvin's 'Preemniki VChK, ili nesostoiavshiisia grazhdanskii mir', *Tatarstan*, 1994, No. 11 and 1995, Nos 1–2, and 'Sledstvennye dela kak istoricheskii istochnik', *Ekho vekov* (Kazan'), May 1995, pp. 170–76, lies

- in the (annual, sometimes monthly) figures on convictions and executions by the Tatarstan OGPU/NKVD between 1929 and 1938 (some 20,000 cases, of which one-fifth of those convicted were shot). See also his edition *in extenso* of the proceedings against Evgeniia Ginzburg, later famous as the author of *Into the Whirlwind*: see *Dva sledstvennykh dela Evgenii Ginzburg* (Kazan', 1994). I.N. Kuznetsov, *Znat' i pomnit': istoricheskoe issledovanie massovykh repressii i reabilitatsii zhertv terrora 30-kh gg.* (Tomsk, 1993), contains material on the repressions, a study of the role in them played by the local party organisation, and a selection of documents. N. Werth cites (in *Revue des études slaves*, 1994, pp. 17–28) a two-volume work by V.P. Danilov, *Spetspereselentsy v Zapadnoi Sibiri* (Novosibirsk, 1993).
53. V.I. Buganov et al. (eds), *Akademicheskoe delo 1929–1931 gg.*, fasc. I: *Delo po obvineniiu akad. S.F. Platonova* (St. Petersburg, 1993); see also A.I. Alatorsev (ed.), 'Nachalo "del" Akademii nauk: stenogramma zasedaniia Osoboi komissii Narkomata RKI SSSR 1929 g.', *IA*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 79–109; V.S. Brachev, 'Sergei Fedorovich Platonov', *OI*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 111–28.
  54. O.V. Khlevniuk, author of *Stalin i Ordzhonikidze: konflikty v Politbiuro v 30-e gody* (Moscow, 1993), has written an article in English that gives the best introduction to the politics of the purge: 'The Objectives of the Great Terror', in Julian Cooper, Maureen Perrie and E.A. Rees (eds), *Soviet History, 1917–53: Essays in Honour of R.W. Davies* (Basingstoke, 1995). N. Zen'kovich, *Tainy kremlevskikh smertei* (Moscow, 1994) seems to be a journalistic compilation. It contains an article by the son of Kuibyshev, in which he supports the (familiar) theory that his father was poisoned. V. Ivanov, 'Zagadka poslednykh dnei Gor'kogo', *Zvezda*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 141–63, comes to a similar conclusion about the death of Gorky. There is, however, as yet no conclusive evidence of Stalin's responsibility for Kirov's murder (as distinct from the repressions that followed it). For circumstantial evidence that exonerates him, see A. Azol'skii, 'Kto ubil Kirova? Opyt domashnego rassledovaniia', *Kontinent*, No. 82 (1995), pp. 179–205. A curious role in the murder was played by the NKVD's secret agent M.N. Volkova: see Z. Vodop'ianova et al. (eds), '"Ia znala, chto predstoit ubiistvo Kirova": versii sekretnogo sotrudnika OGPU–NKVD', *Ist.*, 1994, No. 2, pp. 58–70.
  55. Iu.G. Murin, 'Kak fal'sifirovalos' "delo Bukharina"', *NNI*, 1995, No. 1, pp. 61–76; see also his "'Vsiudu i vezde budu dokazyvat' svoiu nevinnost'": pis'ma Bukharina Stalinu i chlenam Politbiuro, avgust–dekabr' 1936', *Ist.*, 1993, No. 2, pp. 4–18. Murin's compilation, *Iosif Stalin v ob"iatiakh sem'i: iz lichnogo arkhiva* (Berlin, Chicago, Tokyo and Moscow, 1993), has little of value. Stalin's guards' register of individuals whom he received in his office has been published in *IA*, 1994, No. 6 *et seq.*
  56. A.N. Jakovlev, 'Blutige Vergangenheit', *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung*, 1993, No. 1, p. 234; see also N. Boeterblom writing in *ibid.*, p. 66, and *Trud*, 4 June 1992, cited in Getty et al., 'Victims of the Soviet Penal System', p. 1036.
  57. 'Materialy fevral'skogo–martovskogo plenuma TsK VKP(b) 1937 g.', *VI*, 1992, Nos 2–12; 1993, Nos 2 and 5–10; 1994, Nos 1–2, 6 and 8–10, and later issues.

58. 'Massovyie repressii opravdany byt' ne mogut', *VAPRF* (appendix to *Ist.*), 1995, No. 1, pp. 117–32; see also B.A. Starkov, 'The Trial That Was Not Held', *Europe–Asia Studies*, Vol. 46 (1994), pp. 1297–1316.
59. A selection of these in German is to be found in A. Vaksberg, *Die Verfolgten Stalins: Aus den Verliesen des KGB*, translated by S. and F. Rödel (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1993).
60. A.T. Ukolov and V.I. Ivkin, 'O masshtabakh repressii v Krasnoi Armii v predvoennye gody', *VIZh*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 56–63, continued by Ivkin and A.I. Kokurin in *ibid.*, 1993, No. 3. The authors' reasoning seems to me somewhat tendentious; they are apparently unaware of V. Rappoport and Yu. Alexeyev, *High Treason: Essays on the History of the Red Army*, edited by V.G. Trembl (Durham, NC, 1985), Appendix 1, which is a list of 651 executed senior commanders. On the critique of Tukhachevskii, see *VIZh*, 1995, No. 2, p. 83. V. Lebedev (ed.), 'Aktiv – kadrovye ofitsery', *Ist.*, 1994, No. 1, pp. 94–105, prints an NKVD report of 1937 on alleged subversive organisations in the Red Army.
61. O.L. Milova (compiler), Iu.V. Simchenko and A.I. Kuznetsov (eds), *Deportatsiia narodov SSSR (1930–e–1950–e gg.)*, Part I (Moscow, 1992); S. Alieva (ed.), *Tak eto bylo: natsional'nye repressii v SSSR 1919–1952 gg.: repressirovannnye narody segodnia*, 3 vols, Vol. 1 (Moscow, 1993).
62. N.F. Bugai (ed.), *Iosif Stalin – Lavrentiiu Berii: 'ikh nado deportirovat': dokumenty, fakty, kommentarii* (Moscow, 1992); *idem*, '40–e–50–e gg.: posledstviia deportatsii narodov', *OI*, 1992, No. 1, pp. 122–43; *idem*, '30–e–40–e gg.: deportatsii naseleniia s territorii Evropeiskoi Rossii', *OI*, 1992, No. 4, pp. 37–49.
63. N.F. Bugai, 'O vysylke koreitsev iz Dal'nevostochnogo kraia', *OI*, 1992, No. 6, pp. 140–68; *idem*, 'Vyselenie sovetskikh koreitsev s Dal'nego Vostoka', *VI*, 1994, No. 5, pp. 141–8; V.A. Li and E.E. Kim (eds), *Belaia kniga o deportatsii koreiskogo naseleniia Rossii v 30–kh–40–kh gg.*, Book I (Moscow, 1992).
64. On the fate of the Germans, see Iu.V. Kostikov, 'Vyselenie nemtsev iz Kalininskoi oblasti v poslevoennye gody', *VI*, 1994, No. 6, pp. 186–8; M.P. Erin and N.V. Baranova, 'Nemtsy v sovetskom plenu: po arkhivnym materialam Iaroslavskoi oblasti', *OI*, 1995, No. 6, pp. 133–42, assess the reliability of data showing a high mortality rate in prisoner-of-war camps in this province in 1944–45. On the Balts, see V.N. Zemskov, 'Prinuditel'nye migratsii iz Pribaltiki v 1940–1950–kh gg.', *OA*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 4–19. On the massive deportations of 1944, see A.I. Kokurin (ed.), 'Spetsposelentsy v SSSR v 1944 g. ili god bol'shogo pereseleniia' (documents), *OA*, 1993, No. 5, pp. 98–111. On the kulak deportees, V.N. Zemskov, 'Sud'ba "kulatskoi ssylki" (1930–1954 gg.)', *OI*, 1994, No. 1, pp. 118–47, supplements his 'Kulatskaia ssylka nakanune i v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', *SOI*, 1992, No. 2.
65. N.F. Bugai, '20–e–50–e gody: pereseleniia i deportatsiia evreiskogo naseleniia v SSSR', *OI*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 175–85.
66. G.V. Kostyrchenko, 'Kampaniia po bor'be s kosmopolitizmom v SSSR', *VI*, 1994, No. 8, pp. 47–60; A. Borshchagovskii, *Obviniaetsia krov': dokumental'naia povest'* (Moscow, 1994).
67. V.P. Naumov et al., *Nepravednyi sud* (Moscow, 1994).
68. O.V. Khlevniuk, 'Prinuditel'nyi trud v ekonomike SSSR 1929–1941 gg.',

- Svobodnaia mysl'*, 1992, No. 13, pp. 73–84; S.G. Ebenzhans and M.Ia. Vazhnov, 'Proizvodstvennyi fenomen GULAGa', *VI*, 1994, No. 6, pp. 188–90.
69. V.S. Lel'chuk and E.I. Pivovarov, 'Mentalitet sovetskogo obshchestva i "kholodnaia voina": k postanovke problemy', *OI*, 1993, No. 6, pp. 63–78, especially p. 76.
  70. See, for example, L.E. Razgon, *La vie sans lendemains* (Paris, 1991), and the articles collected in A. Brossat et al., *Ozerlag 1937–1964: Le système du Goulag: traces perdues, mémoires réveillées d'un camp stalinien* (Paris, 1991); see also O.P. Elantseva, 'Kto i kak stroil BAM v 30-e gody', *OA*, 1992, No. 5, pp. 71–81, and above, note 14 (on Kurman). On the Vorkuta camp complex, see N.A. Morozov and M.B. Rogachev, 'Gulag v Komi ASSR (20-e–50-e gg.)', *OI*, 1995, No. 2, pp. 182–7.
  71. S.S. Vilenskii (ed.), *Soprotivlenie v Gulage: vospominaniia, pis'ma, dokumenty* (Moscow, 1992). Vilenskii is a member of the *Vozrashchenie* organisation. A.I. Kokurin (ed.), 'Vosstanie v Steplage, mai–iiun' 1954 g.', *OA*, 1994, No. 4, pp. 33–81.
  72. L.V. Boitsova and V.V. Boitsova, 'Vosstanovlenie i okhrana prav zhertv massovykh repressii: sostoianie i perspektivy zakonodatel'nogo regulirovaniia', *Gosudarstvo i pravo*, 1992, No. 6, pp. 15–26; M.I. Pastukhov, *Reabilitatsiia vinovnykh: osnovy pravovogo instituta* (Minsk, 1993); 'Peresmotreny prigovory v otnoshenii k inostrantsev', *Ist.*, 1994, No. 4, pp. 108–12. The first two works are purely juridical studies and play down the all-important political aspects of the question; the last reveals that 44,279 foreigners were in the GULag (excluding prisoners-of-war?) when Stalin died.
  73. Iu.I. Igritskii, 'Snova o totalitarizme', *OI*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 3–17; see also N.S. Simonov, 'Termidor, Briumer ili Friuktidor? Evoliutsiia stalinskogo rezhima vlasti: prognozy i real'nost'', *OI*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 3–18; L.N. Vechenov and Iu.I. Igritskii, *Totalitarizm: chto eto takoe?*, 2 parts (Moscow, 1993) (a translation of Western sources); K.S. Gadzhiev, 'Totalitarizm kak fenomen XX veka', *Voprosy filosofii*, 1992, No. 2, pp. 3–25.
  74. M. Ferretti, 'Mémoire et histoire dans la Russie d'aujourd'hui', *La Nouvelle Alternative* (Paris), Vol. 32 (1993), p. 7.
  75. *The International Newsletter on Historical Studies of Comintern, Communism and Stalinism*, edited by H. Bayerlein (Aachen) is a beginning, but needs to be expanded.

# 9 Work and Leisure among Textile Workers in Soviet Russia Iaroslavl' in the 1930s

Gabriele Gorzka

## **Preliminary Remarks on the Problem**

This chapter is related to previous studies, which I wrote in the 1980s, on work and workers' culture in the former Soviet Union, using the example of workers' clubs: their goals, organisation and practical activities, and the relationship between what they claimed to do and what they actually did.<sup>1</sup> Whereas these studies concerned either Russia in general or the urban centres of Moscow and St. Petersburg in particular and concentrated on the post-revolutionary phase of the 1920s, the present study directs its attention to the Russian provinces: to Iaroslavl', where, because of its commercially advantageous position on the Volga, textile factories had been sited in the first half of the eighteenth century, to be joined later by metal-working factories, thus giving the town a long industrial worker tradition. The chronological focus of the study is the 1930s, the phase when Stalinist power structures were established in Russian society.

My aim is to describe the everyday life of a certain social group in a narrowly defined geographical area over a particular period of Soviet history. By comparing the results of regional research with findings that might, for this period of time, apply to the whole of the Soviet Union, it is possible, on the one hand, to illustrate general statements and data by means of concrete examples, and, on the other hand, to focus in certain cases upon the dynamic of local or regional processes in the economic, political or cultural life.



From the mid-1920s, a clear trend is discernible: a division, which became deeper and broader, developed between the revolutionary vanguard or political representatives on the one hand and the working class on the other.

Immediately after the October Revolution the intelligentsia of the left made several attempts to institute new socialist forms of life (for example, the emancipation of women and the nationalisation of social forms of reproduction); to minimise the division between work and leisure (for example, workers' clubs as leisure facilities at the work place); to align art and architecture to production standards and technical progress (for example, production art, constructivism in the theatre and architecture, montage techniques in photography and film); to raise the cultural level generally by offering better opportunities for education (for example, the literacy programme); to make the working class the recipient of cultural goals and strategies, whether as the concrete subject of education, proletarian science or art (*Proletkult*), or as a social criterion for future socialist planning (in architecture and urban planning) or as a metaphor for structures of modern highly technologised work organisation (for example, the machine poetry of Gastev, NOT – the scientific organisation of work, and the Time League). In this respect, the 1920s were a large social experiment, with the focus on the proletariat, at least as an abstract social variable.

If sections of the work-force, and especially the younger, better-qualified industrial workers, were enthusiastic about such plans and opportunities in the early years and helped to carry them forward, and even to shape them (the *Proletkult*), the middle of the 1920s witnessed a growing disenchantment, which can be explained multidimensionally:

1. The proletariat changed as a result of the in-migration of new labour from rural areas with rather traditional cultural values and interests, and the urban worker avant-garde became a minority within the industrial labour force.
2. In the mid-1920s, the political leadership and control of the Communist Party began to assert itself in culturally active organisations, and this entailed a loss of the spontaneity and experimentation which had been characteristic of the early post-revolutionary years. In particular, the formerly politically active and better-qualified workers retired from the public scene.

One begins to discern a gradual shift of workers' leisure interests to private, non-public forms (for example, association with friends, parties at home, or walks) or upward mobility at the work-place. The proportion of creative self-made artistic activity declined. Workers increasingly became passive consumers of professionally organised programmes (for example, the theatre and cinema).

So much for the first decade after the October Revolution. A *second cultural revolution* was initiated, parallel to the Five Year Plan strategy in the economy, which was proclaimed at the end of the 1920s. This was supposed to establish cultural forms quickly and systematically, and to raise the cultural level of the entire country, and was able to gain broad support among the intelligentsia of the leftist avant-garde, which was convinced of the validity of the Marxist model of socialism. In the various artistic circles and organisations there was a competition to present oneself as the defender of the only correct political line and to annihilate the others by critical extermination (a precursor of later physical extermination), generally giving oneself over to the service of the prevalent party political goals.

New education opportunities were opened for the broad masses; the raising of the cultural level was now on the agenda. The 'struggle against illiteracy' was waged on the 'cultural front'. By party decree artists were entrusted with a social mission, 'to present the heroism of socialist progress and the class struggle and the growth of the "new people"'. Among the tasks of art and culture was the 'ideological reformation and education of workers in the spirit of socialism'.<sup>2</sup>

But how did it look from the side of the 'ruling class', the proletariat? Who was still ready to accept cultural-revolutionary words or goals? Could the gap between the interests of workers and those of the proletarian intelligentsia or party avant-garde be closed again or would it open still further? How far did the goals of socialist culture, as formulated by political authorities (for example, the party, trade unions, writers and other artists) in the 1930s, agree with the cultural concepts, expectations and interests of the so-called masses (with the emphasis here on the strongly rural work-force in factories of large-scale industrial production)? If there were tensions or contradictions between the official centrally dictated social goals in cultural policy and the regional or socially specific interests of individuals or groups, how were they articulated, settled, repressed or resolved ?

The starting-point of this enquiry is the official presentation of cultural development which was disseminated at the time through the media or reports from appropriate organisations. A new stage of the cultural revolution for the entire country was proclaimed, controlled by an increasingly centralist party machinery.

The development towards a socialist society proclaimed by Stalin will be examined here against the facts that can be derived from contemporary sources.<sup>3</sup> In this way, one begins to discern the effect of the guidelines and programmes, centrally prescribed by Moscow, on the regions, how strongly they affected the population of the regions, and whether people there had other priorities or matters of more immediate concern to them. By taking into consideration internal factory sources, such as the minutes and resolutions of meetings, correspondence or reports, one begins to reconstruct a less cosmetic picture of everyday life, and the living conditions and interests of the working class, in the 1930s.

### **Working Conditions in Industry**

In November 1928 Stalin argued at the Central Committee plenum of the Communist Party: 'We have come to power in a country with a terribly backward technology ... In order to achieve the final victory of socialism in our country we have also to catch up with and overtake the [capitalist] countries in technology and economics. Either we achieve this or we will be crushed.'<sup>4</sup> In the debate about which direction the country was to take the Stalinist line was adopted: a 'revolution from above', a revolutionary course in economic policy, with forced industrialisation as the motor that would engineer greater social cohesion. The planned control of economic growth was implemented by the Five Year Plans, which became obligatory for all areas of production and later for almost all areas of life.

The ambitious industrialisation programme was handicapped in its initial phase by low productivity in the new as well as the old factories. The reasons are multi-layered:

1. there was a shortage of management personnel and qualified workers;

2. as a result of falling living standards during the first Five Year Plan the motivation of the employees was not particularly high and morale was generally rather low, as was made clear by absenteeism, the production of sub-standard goods, and slackness;
3. the organisation of work, both the implementation of the plan and day to day production, did not run smoothly and as a result there were many frictional losses.

In 1928, the Five Year Plan decreed the introduction of the third shift in factories, and this led to a substantial increase in the size of the work-force. In the Iaroslavl' textile company Krasnyi Perekop the new shift plan increased the manual work-force by 18 per cent and the white-collar by 6 per cent.<sup>5</sup> The new staff was recruited partly from the urban unemployed of the NEP, of whom there were 1,071,000 registered in 1926 (against only 18,000 in 1931), but mostly from the rural population which had been uprooted by collectivisation. The new work-force had little academic or professional training, with the result that skilled employees were transferred to more qualified positions. This fluctuation within the companies caused a perceptible increase in the number of work-related accidents (in Krasnyi Perekop by 14 per cent), because there was generally no instruction in the use of the new machines. Not surprisingly, the quality of the manufactured products left a lot to be desired. The result of the compulsory mobilisation of the entire work-force for industry was that, while the production figures rose, the production of rejects increased exponentially, and this ultimately meant an overall decrease in production. According to an internal report of the Commission for Economic Affairs in 1929, production of rejects for the year 1928-29 rose in some jobs by 40 per cent in Krasnyi Perekop. In addition, most of the new work-force from a rural background were not familiar with industrial work organisation, in particular the rhythm of the fixed working times of factory work: their slackness at the work place, their absenteeism (especially on the old religious holidays) and their frequent transfer from one job to another were factors that inhibited production. The night shifts in particular revealed a high level of slackness: tea-drinking, eating, and even sleeping on the job, were not unusual and led to greater strictness in disciplinary procedures.

In order to create a system of financial incentives, a new wage scheme was introduced gradually from 1928, the number of wage groupings was extended and the piece-work wage was expanded. A highly skilled worker could thus earn three to four times as much as an unskilled worker in the same branch. This acted as an incentive for workers to increase their skills or to work more intensively on a piece-work basis. Compared with the NEP, in which the differences between physical and mental work, and between light and heavy work, could be evened out, this was a complete U-turn. With Stalin's speech against 'wage levelling', the politics of vertical mobilisation received a boost. The special individual performance was rewarded through an additional premium system.

This wages policy was intended to increase total productivity, by creating a stimulus for more intensive or better quality work. At the same time, it was intended to counteract the growing dissatisfaction of the workers. This dissatisfaction was becoming worse as a result of the deteriorating living standards caused by the first Five Year Plan: prices were increasing more rapidly than wages (between 1927/28 and 1932 the price index had risen from 100 to 251.8 and nominal wages from 100 to 177.9, and neither premiums nor fringe benefits for 'shock workers' could prevent living standards for most workers from deteriorating.

As the buying power of money diminished, the variety of food on offer was also drastically reduced as a result of the collectivisation policy. Per capita consumption of meat, bacon fat and poultry between 1928 and 1932 fell from 51.68 kg to 16.93 kg. and butter from 2.97 to 1.75 kg. On the other hand, consumption of potatoes and bread rose. In 1930-31 half of the income of the urban working classes was spent on food. In addition, food began to be rationed from 1928, and there were difficulties with the supply of other goods in the first Five Year Plan.<sup>6</sup>

At the end of the 1920s, the work-forces of large factories split into two groups: a majority of mostly older workers, who were fairly sceptical about the Five Year Plans because they saw that work was to be intensified and they felt very acutely the deterioration of their real living standards; and a minority of younger, active party workers, who embraced and actively supported the strategy of an industrial revolution from above which would finally bring about a socialist order.

In the case of the latter group, they were young workers who were swept along by the dynamic of economic restructuring, partly from political conviction about the superiority of the Soviet way to socialism and partly because they saw this phase of discontinuity bound up with their own social advancement. They looked forward to material improvements, opportunities for professional advancement or exotic adventure from employment in areas with extreme conditions, both social and climatic. With total conviction they developed and carried out the most varied campaigns of the 1930s to increase production and improve the quality of work.

Their personal ambition coincided with the interests of the state in mobilising the untapped reserves in the work process and forcing the pace of development; the combination of these two factors created considerable potential to increase economic power.

'Shock work' (*udarnichestvo*) and socialist competition (*socialisticheskoe sorevnovanie*) were the first campaigns to be initiated in 1929 by the unions and the party, by the decree of 9 May 1929, or Komsomol and were greeted by the young workers with enthusiasm.

The job of the 'shock brigades' in the factories was to demonstrate how the work process could be optimised with little wastage, the economical use of time and saving of resources. Their efforts would be rewarded with honours and material benefits.

In socialist competition the aim was also to reduce production costs, rationalise production and improve morale. There was to be competition between factories producing the same products, and between departments or even work-benches in the same factory. According to official statistics (*Trud v SSSR*, 1932) almost three-quarters of all factories were involved in this sort of competition, and the percentage statistics of overfulfilment of the plan became higher and higher. Looking at the regional level we find that participation in socialist competition started slowly in 'Krasnyi Perekop', and speeded up only after massive pressure from the unions and the Communist Party factory cells: thus, within four months in 1930 (January to April) the number of workers engaged in the campaigns rose from 20.36 per cent to 81.20 per cent<sup>7</sup>.

Among the forms of competition were contests between factories in town or region. Within a factory, there were the 'shock brigades', the commune as collective (wage sharing), the simple commune

(mutual support in work without wage sharing) and individual competition.

An extreme form of socialist competition manifested itself in the Stakhanov movement (1935–38), where the focus was on the individual worker with a top performance: his above-average high performance was possible only as a result of a total strategy of preparation and support from a team, which remained unnoticed in the background.

The euphoric official statistics about the victorious march of socialist competition must not, however, obscure the fact that it was only ever a minority that enthusiastically supported the campaigns. 80–90 per cent of the workers remained indifferent to or sceptical of the campaigns. They rightly supposed, as later production quota increases revealed, that the result for the individual would be more work *without* material reward. Acts of sabotage upon the ‘shock workers’ were quite normal, machines were destroyed, materials hidden, the work process disrupted, and physical attacks on colleagues were not uncommon.

Internal statistics reveal that on 1 January 1936, the high point of the Stakhanov movement, Krasnyi perekop employed 11,062 workers, of whom 11 per cent (1,299) were Stahhanovites. Of these only 505 (40 per cent) had fulfilled their monthly target in December 1935. In the course of the 1930s the differentiation among the work-force into highly skilled well-paid workers on the one hand and unskilled workers on the other increased. This material and status demarcation was accompanied by a conscious one: a sort of ‘worker aristocracy’ began to emerge, which more and more identified itself with the political guidelines on production increases, and was in future actively to support much firmer measures against this so-called slackness.

### **Factory Decision-making Structures and Workers’ Interests: The Situation in the Iaroslavl’ Textile Factory ‘Krasnyi Perekop’**

This factory, founded in 1722 and nationalised in 1917, was one of the largest textile enterprises in post-revolutionary Russia. On 1 October 1929 it employed 12,409 manual workers, 70 engineers, technicians and economists, and 362 white-collar staff; 90 per cent of the personnel were semi-skilled and 10 per cent skilled.

The factory, like all other factories, was confronted by the following problem. The main concern of the Five Year Plan was to optimise production and performance. The criteria for success of the planned system, which were totally output-oriented, and the politically prescribed goal of drastically raising productivity, conflicted with previous practice, according to which factories, in addition to their function as a producer, were also responsible for the social welfare of their employees and contributed financially to their cultural life (generally, 10 per cent of the profits made). A sober analysis of factories reveals the burdens caused by this additional social and cultural expenditure; but because any reduction in this expenditure might be politically dangerous and cause massive workers' protest, the factory managers avoided radical restructuring. The result was problematic not only for all concerned, but also in terms of the political economy. These social and cultural obligations continued to be fulfilled by the factories, but they had negative consequences for overall factory performance, because they reduced profit margins and did not show up in the balance sheet, which was essentially concerned with production figures. As a result, the factories tried as much as possible in the 1930s to minimise these extra payments, by making tenants pay rents, reducing social expenditure or delaying investment. This led to conflicts with the workers, who regarded social benefits as part of their wages.

The social situation of provincial industrial workers in the 1930s can be illustrated by the example of 'Krasnyi Perekop'.

### *Living Conditions*

The building of new housing was a long way behind what was needed in Iaroslavl', as elsewhere in the country. Factories built so-called *kazarmy*, barrack-like structures with minimal furnishing and small rooms, which led off right and left from a long corridor.

In 1932 there were eight of these blocks, built in 1924, in the grounds of Krasnyi Perekop: they provided accommodation for 820 families or 4,656 persons, almost half of the work-force. On average two to three families shared a room, which meant a living space of 2-3 sq.m. per person.

Because the roofs were often in poor condition, the walls soon



became damp and rodents built their nests there. Broken windows and doors were a problem and were repaired only after many complaints.

Water pipes were in short supply, which meant that the housing estate was not connected to the water-supply system of Iaroslavl' city. Water came from the factory system, which drew unfiltered water from the Volga tributary, the Kotorosl. This resulted in typhoid and other epidemics.<sup>8</sup>

There were not even any sewage pipes. Excrement was taken away in container lorries, which gave rise to constant complaints about smells and unhygienic conditions. All these problems took up a great deal of time in the factory meetings. The management usually understood that the criticisms were justified and promised help, but this help was far from immediately forthcoming. The basic problem, 'that the housing requirements could be only partially satisfied', continued throughout the 1930s. Although two new blocks with 3,500 sq.m. of living space had been built by 1936, the management reckoned that a further 20,000 sq.m. or 10–12 blocks were needed.

In spite of the open and harsh criticism expressed by the workers of living conditions and the inadequate infrastructure of the housing estate, it is nevertheless true that the factory accommodation, with all its defects and low standards, was still an improvement on the private housing in the villages, where life was extremely rudimentary, with cramped conditions and no water, electricity or heating.

It is therefore understandable that living quarters became a prestige object, a status symbol of social advancement. The living quarters of white-collar workers, for example, were of much better quality than those of the manual workers. Accordingly, a separate apartment became the highest reward for the highest rate of productivity.

### *The bania (bath-house)*

Because of the inadequate sanitary arrangements in the hostels of Krasnyi Perekop, the factory's own bathhouse, the *bania*, was very important. It could accommodate 250 people an hour. But it was open only twice a week and thus did not adequately cover the cleanliness requirements of the workers, who needed to wash after their shift. And when the *bania* was closed for several months at a time for repairs, one can easily understand the anger of the work-force.

*Canteen*

The factory did not have its own canteen, but there was another works canteen not far away which they could use. Here 2,000 meals were served each day; the canteen was open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and could accommodate 300 people at a sitting. It was also open to members of workers' families. Alcohol was most emphatically not served<sup>9</sup>.

For reasons of either tradition or economy, many families preferred to cook for themselves in the communal kitchens of the hostels. Because there were no facilities for storing food, it was normally kept in the living quarters, mostly in boxes under the bed.

In 1934, the works management decided to open a central bakery in a former church that provided 18 tons of bread a day, and to increase the already existing chain of fifteen shops and stores on the works premises by five. The personnel required to run these establishments were taken from production.

A central distribution service provided clothing and footwear for the entire *oblast'* (province or region) of Iaroslavl'. Thus, for example, in January 1934, 800 pairs of shoes were available for distribution in and around Iaroslavl', 77 per cent of which (680 pairs) were reserved for workers. On the lowest rung of the distribution ladder stood doctors and academics (4.5 per cent or 36 pairs) and artists (0.5 per cent or 4 pairs). Suits or credit notes for a tailor were given only as rewards to top workers. The works management had to requisition them individually from the appropriate textile union<sup>10</sup>.

Since there was a work-force totalling 12,000 in Krasnyi Perekop alone, it is clear that there was a severe imbalance between supply and demand for consumers throughout the 1930s.

**Factory Debates**

Open and unrestrained criticism was a normal feature of factory life: by the work-force of management, and vice versa. If the idle, dirty, uninterested, drunken worker was attacked by the management, the workers in their turn were never short of words to describe the mismanagement of their bosses.

At general meetings the most important questions to be discussed

concerned social and wage-related matters. Complaints about working conditions included dirt, noise, smell, inadequate lighting, high accident rates, shortages of tools and spare parts, delayed wage payments, and inedible canteen food. They were also aimed at organisational deficiencies: the arbitrary transfer of personnel from one job to another, the high degree of fluctuation in individual departments, irrational instructions, and authoritarian behaviour on the part of managers.

The central directives of the 1930s to increase work discipline and morale aggravated the feeling harboured by the work-force that they were being held solely responsible for the non-fulfilment of the planned targets, whereas the failures of management were excluded from all critical assessment.

Consider the following example from a general meeting of Krasnyi Perekop held in October 1934: only 75 per cent of the planned target had been reached, and the reject quota was very high. The open discussion contained no analysis of the reasons for the inadequate performance, merely reproach of one side by the other. There was a clear hierarchical and emotional division between the leading functionaries on the one side and a closed section of the work-force on the other. The workers expressed open criticism of the mismanagement by the bosses: as a result of a never-ending stream of new instructions and transfers of workers within a department new training was constantly necessary, and this led to a high rate of sub-standard production.

The reproach of poor work discipline from the bosses was countered with the question of discipline among the administration, which disclaimed responsibility for, among other things, quite spectacular building delays.

The charge brought by the management and foremen that the workers were untidy, indeed dirty, prompted the spokesmen for the work-force to accuse the management of making it impossible for them to keep themselves clean when, for example, the only place where they could wash, the *bania*, was closed for four months without any reason being given and, despite all workers' demands, there was still no central laundry, even though this had been specified in the factory plan. To sum up the criticism of the workers: 'If you oil a machine well, it works properly'.

It is generally true for the whole of the 1930s, the period under examination, that all questions related to the works were decided in the

plenary meetings and prepared by commissions. Internal discussion was very important. Every plan number and every planning strategy was submitted to the work-force to be voted upon and extensively discussed. The meetings were in no way ritualised or manipulated. Criticism of works matters was open and expressed very forcefully. The party functionaries confined themselves to presenting general statements of the official directives and principal goals of party policy, to some extent as frameworks for action. But, despite the supposed liberal and grass-roots democratic procedure of the decision-making structures, this procedure remained channelled and ritual-like, thereby limiting its effectiveness.

Thus it is noticeable that the decision-making procedures and subjects remained almost identical until the end of the 1930s. As the example given shows, the subjects discussed in the works meetings were production or welfare inadequacies. Resolutions were passed on these matters, commissions established, those responsible removed, and some time later reports, mostly with critical assessment, submitted. But qualitative improvements were not achieved. This circle continued uninterrupted: criticism and suggestions for improvement were regularly made, widely discussed and accepted, but analysis of weak points remained confined to the individual factories themselves. Political orders (planned figures or political decrees) from on high, for example from Gosplan or the Stalinist government, were not subjects of discussion, let alone criticism. Only very occasionally in the meetings was the question raised whether it might not be more sensible to work out the planned targets from the bottom up, starting with the experience of the factories themselves, instead of directives coming from Moscow to the factories in top-down fashion. This would prevent, for example, plans based on false figures (for instance, concerning the actual number of employees) from being made. But criticism of this sort was the very rare exception. Only immediate superiors were accused of inaccessibility, unprofessional conduct or falsifying figures, but there was never a debate about how their room for manoeuvre was limited by orders from national authorities. Thus, there was no identification of workers and management, in the sense that they represented the factory's interests against the higher economic authorities in Moscow. Rather, the entire factory became increasingly polarised and a rigid hierarchy developed within the works between workers and management.

The state – the Stalinist government – did not assume responsibility for the whole area of social reproduction, and left these matters to the factories and co-operatives or handed them back to the families (as with the new responsibility of women for bringing up children, the stabilisation of the family by the marriage laws of 1936, and the abortion ban). The central state authorities therefore remained exempt from criticism. They were not held responsible for deficiencies or failures and they were not judged by the revolutionary goals of October 1917. Only the decision makers on the spot were considered responsible, accountable and replaceable, and they regularly ‘got it in the neck’.

And so the carousel of criticism and justification went round and round, with frustration growing on both sides; a factory relationship based on the use of power arose as a result of authoritarian discipline, and in time it killed off political commitment on the part of the workers.

This can be illustrated by the production meetings. The demand for grass-roots democracy was very high in 1930: every quarter, about 50 meetings took place in Krasnyi Perekop, attended by 45 per cent of the work-force. In one quarter of 1930, 104 questions about improving the work process and productivity were discussed; 25 workers’ suggestions were accepted and 18 put into practice. If these figures are related to the absolute figure of 4,420 participants over this period, it becomes clear how time-consuming the procedure was and how meagre the results of the production discussions were. It is therefore understandable that interest gradually began to wane, and this was often said openly by the workers: ‘Zachem my budem khodit’ [v sobranie], sidet’ i vse naprasno’ (‘Why should we attend those meetings, and all in vain?’).<sup>11</sup>

### **Cultural Possibilities and Interests**

From the beginning to the middle of the 1920s, there was a wide variety of cultural activities on offer. In addition to the commercial ones, the cinema, theatre or circus, there were also events and leisure facilities specially designed for the workers, which were offered by organisations, such as Proletkult, the unions or *Narkompros* (People’s

Commissariat for Enlightenment), each with its own ideas and sometimes in competition with one another. Workers' clubs, for example, were typical establishments: not only did they provide educational opportunities for workers, but they were also places where people could and did develop their artistic interests, by providing space for spontaneous and creative activities, fun, play, sociability, and meetings both serious and entertaining. But, in the second half of the 1920s, there was a change, as leisure activities became more and more a matter of party politics. Workers who, up to that point, had been actively engaged in cultural activities began to withdraw from the increasingly centrally planned and professionalised cultural scene and began to appear as passive consumers of a pre-arranged programme.

With the first Five Year Plan, the Communist Party made strenuous efforts to structure the cultural sector and integrate it into the general principles of party policy. The idea of being able to bring about the economic and social restructuring of society by means of a centrally controlled act of force (the revolution from above) was applied also to cultural activities. According to the party, culture should have specific, educational goals. The party insisted on its vanguard role of determining political guidelines and deciding about the allocation of positions. The Communist Party proclaimed the second cultural revolution: campaigns were initiated, slogans issued, activists nominated, and weak organisers replaced by strong ones. Almost nothing was left to chance. For example, a sort of general staff plan was introduced in the staging of official cultural events. In the preparations for the celebrations and the May Day parade of 1930 in Iaroslavl', the unions responsible for the organisation planned every single detail: every slogan was systematically assigned and the order determined (thus, for example, because of its good production figures, Krasnyi Perekop obtained the privilege of driving the first car in the parade). Spontaneity was no longer required from the participants. On the contrary, this would have been regarded as a disruptive factor in the proceedings.

In the factories themselves, 'cultural unity fronts' were established, according to which targets were worked out for a cultural Five Year Plan, as they had been for the economic plan. The workers' club was reorganised: it lost its largely organisational independence and became directly subject to the factory council.

The new organisational structure in factory cultural life was almost military: at every level (the whole factory, workshop, department and living quarters) in the 1930s, political-cultural soviets were established, each one with its own staff sub-division (for mass work, political campaigns, the literacy programme, worker correspondents, and the library). This sort of organisational structure, accompanied by the personal accountability of all those responsible to the management, was supposed to make cultural activities more efficient. An extreme example of this approach was the literacy campaign of 1931. In Krasnyi Perekop the 'cultural army' was called upon to lead the advance attack, 'all the activists of the cultural soviet were mobilised',<sup>12</sup> in order to comb all departments of the factory for illiterates. In March 1932, there were 82 training groups, consisting of 409 individuals from the cultural army: they taught 170 illiterates and 1,520 semi-literates. The result in May 1936 was sobering: the number of those seriously receiving instruction remained small (out of 5,551 possible candidates only 884 were taking part in these lessons). The discipline of turning up regularly for the lessons was fairly lax, and the conditions in which the whole enterprise took place were not particularly inviting.

The membership of the clubs and 'red corners', despite or perhaps because of the large activist participation, did not fare much better. In 1929 there were 22 circles with a total of 1,415 members (809 men and 606 women, of whom 752 were under 22), but in 1935 there were only 16 circles with 535 members, a reduction of about a third. In view of the priorities set by the cultural activities, it became clear that most culturally active workers were more interested in light entertainment than in general political enlightenment, with the result that dances, concerts and sporting events were generally well attended.

The weak points of cultural work were regularly the subject of discussion by the various organs concerned with cultural matters (the union, the works committee and the party leadership). For one thing, the problem was raised of the shockingly low quality of course and circle leaders.<sup>13</sup> A resolution was made to offer systematic training, and since this too was to be provided by the party, it also served the purpose of securing tighter political control.

In the mid-1930s, the Communist Party strengthened its claim to have subordinated cultural activities to party aims. In 1934 it issued secret instructions to the factory management to undertake 'personnel

cleansing' of the course and circle leaders, with the aim of making cultural institutions the 'centre of communist education'.<sup>14</sup>

From all of this, it may be concluded that the control and planning of cultural activities even in the mid-1930s was not yet settled and that the clubs did not yet have the system-stabilising function required by the party, even though they were no longer places for self-determined artistic activity. Rather, the trend of using leisure facilities principally as places of recreation, which had developed in the second half of the 1920s, continued. Recreational and social activities, such as dancing, sport and mushroom-gathering excursions, were much more attractive than political education.

Those workers who were interested in organised leisure activities became increasingly enthusiastic about education. They took up the offers of professional training, which had become available in the factories at the beginning of the 1930s. In view of the substantial lack of trained personnel (for example, in 1929 there were only 19 skilled and 24 semi-skilled workers out of a work-force of 11,000 in Krasnyi Perekop),<sup>15</sup> in-house initial and further training became a matter of priority with the beginning of the first Five Year Plan. Thus, in autumn 1931 a 'teaching combine' was set up in Krasnyi Perekop which offered the following: courses for newly appointed workers, poly-technic production courses, workers' technical school, professional-technical courses, further training courses for engineers and technical personnel. At the beginning of 1932, more than 2,000 workers were receiving instruction here. In addition to the professional-technical courses, there were also foreign language courses, driving instruction, accountancy courses and so on. By the end of the 1930s, about half of the work-force was receiving instruction to obtain further professional qualifications.<sup>16</sup> By 1939 the number of technical specialists in the factory had risen from 70 (1929) to 321.<sup>17</sup>

This sort of professional commitment was regarded by many participants not simply as an opportunity for improving personal qualifications and thus as a building block for future social advancement, but as politically useful to society as a whole. Raising the level of technical education was the declared goal or precondition for realising the policy of forced industrialisation. With the introduction and expansion of professional training courses came the opportunity to pursue personal interest, while satisfying the official party line. What made



these scientific-technical courses so attractive was that they were, especially in a politically sensitive climate, ideologically neutral territory. Opponents as well as supporters of the party line were able here to pursue common interests. Only those who openly broke the rules of political neutrality had to reckon with sanctions. Thus, in 1931 a former worker in Krasnyi Perekop, because he had made certain statements damaging to the party, lost his student status and union membership at the workers' faculty after disciplinary proceedings.<sup>18</sup>

The overwhelming majority of workers from Krasnyi Perekop spent most of their leisure time in their own and not in some prescribed fashion. Most of it was spent on shopping, the household, and relaxation. The vacuum between unwanted politically directed leisure activities and activities aimed more at young people (dancing and cinema) was filled by behaviour that may be described as strongly traditional and typically rural: boredom, drinking, card-playing, and brawling were characteristic of the hostels and streets of the housing estates during the 1930s to an extent previously unknown. As an internal report stated in 1936,

In their leisure time and especially on holidays the young people [from the factory youth hostel] were left largely to their own devices and wandered from one street corner to another. [This resulted in] collective drinking.<sup>19</sup>

Political campaigns and programmes rebounded on themselves: only a minority of young workers took an interest in them. In the 1920s, young workers were active in the atheist movements, but in the 1930s there was almost no interest on the part of the vast majority of the population. From 1932 annual 'olympiads' of amateur cultural work were organised, but only by a minority of activists; most workers preferred to observe these activities from the safe distance of the non-participating spectator.

## **Conclusion**

The claim to central control over national development through an economic and cultural 'revolution from above' was first publicly made by the Communist Party and artists close to it in 1928-29 with the first Five Year Plan, and practical steps were taken in the 1930s to realise

this revolution. The central planned targets and directives, however, remained so global and abstract that they had little to do with practical reality. This was true of both economic planning logic and realisation and political-cultural ambitions. The recipients of this policy, the members of the newly industrialised work-force, were by no means unpolitical, uncivilised or culturally uninterested; they had quite concrete ideas, interests and needs and were committed to the community and state, but they shied away from party political indoctrination and mostly refused to accept political campaigns and general party-controlled forms of agitation. The political authorities never managed to find the right way to approach the masses; they neglected everyday questions and underestimated the level and interests of workers, by offering them empty words of propaganda. Of their politically controlled offers, the only ones to find widespread acceptance were the offers of basic education and professional training. But in political-cultural matters party-political strategies failed. The reason for this failure is that the party activists had not found any instrument that would support them in their ideological mission to bring about a pan-socialist consensus.

Marxist theory had no ready and detailed answers to cultural-revolutionary questions. The ideas of Bogdanov, Lunacharskii or the theoreticians of *Proletkult* to develop a new concept for a socialist culture were blocked by the Bolsheviks at the beginning of the 1920s for power-political reasons. The cultural revolution from above of 1928 and the socialist realism of the 1930s were unable to create scientific approaches or forms that convinced the broad masses. The claims of the cultural revolution became increasingly removed from everyday life, which came to have less and less in common with the socialist ideal. Socialist culture degenerated into propaganda. The 'new man' remained the motif and subject of the artists of socialist realism, whereas the real man became more alienated than ever from the 'new way of life' after the October Revolution.

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2. Status of Soviet Union of Writers in 1934, cited in Dietrich Beyrau, *Intelligenz und Dissens. Die russischen Bildungsschichten in der Sowjetunion 1917 bis 1985* (Göttingen, 1993), p. 95.
3. Based on material from the regional archive of Iaroslavl': documents of the Iaroslavl' textile factory Krasnyi Perekop 1928–1938, the textile workers' union (various levels), and city and regional cultural organisations. They are compared with published accounts, such as the *History of Krasnyi Perekop*, local press cuttings, and relevant cultural-political statements of institutions such as the Communist Party, unions, and the soviets.
4. I.V. Stalin, *Werke* 11 (Berlin, 1954), p. 22ff.
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11. Ibid., R 1608, op. 1, d. 369, l. 28.
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13. Ibid., R 1608, op. 1, d. 128, l. 57.
14. Ibid., R 1608, op. 1, d. 355, l. 7.
15. See Gerasimov, *Krasnyi Perekop*, p. 191.
16. 6,268 in 1939: see Gerasimov, *Krasnyi Perekop*, p. 227.
17. See Gerasimov, *Krasnyi Perekop*, p. 227.
18. Iaroslavl' Regional State Archive, R 1608, op. 1, d. 104, l. 3.
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# 10 Categorising Resistance to Rural Stakhanovism

Mary Buckley

The term 'Stakhanovism' immediately conjures up pictures of Soviet industrial workers of the 1930s who emulated the feats of Aleksei Stakhanov, a miner who throughout the night of 30–31 August 1935 hewed fourteen times his quota of coal. Stakhanovism was named after him and can usefully be defined as a movement to increase labour productivity to the point of encouraging maximum productivity.<sup>1</sup> It exceeded shock work, which was also an over-fulfilment of norms but not necessarily to the 'maximum'. A picture that is not generally triggered by the concept of Stakhanovism is one of milkmaids trying to obtain more milk from their cows, or pig-breeders attempting to ensure that more piglets are born and survive, or tractor drivers ploughing more hectares than before. None the less, the Soviet regime did attempt to spread the Stakhanovite movement to the countryside, with mixed results. Hitherto little has been written on this.<sup>2</sup>

Many peasants did not wish to become Stakhanovites, not least because the title demanded harder work. Others, however, such as Mariia Demchenko in sugar-beet, Natal'ia Tereshkova in milking, Vladimir Zuev in pig-breeding, Pasha Angelina in tractor driving and Fedor Kolesov in combine-harvesting, became famous household names for their production feats. Special congresses and conferences were held to encourage rural Stakhanovism, to call for its spread, to popularise new Stakhanovite work methods and to reward its best peasants with Orders of Lenin and presents. Rural Stakhanovites theoretically earned more for their successes, lived in better accommodation than other peasants, and occasionally basked in sanatoriums. The more prominent ones were co-opted in to the Supreme Soviet and joined the Communist Party.

Reality, however, was more complicated. Often rural Stakhanovites

did not obtain better housing, and complained that they were not paid adequately and that the farm authorities failed to support their endeavours to adopt new work methods. And other peasants sometimes reacted against them, making life on the farm difficult and unpleasant. Despite official attempts by political leaders and the press to encourage Stakhanovism, it was a movement which met with various forms of resistance, ranging from malicious gossip behind Stakhanovites' backs to their murder. Procuracy archives, *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* ('Peasant Newspaper'), biographies and Stakhanovites' memoirs provide the richest illustrations. Other useful sources include state farm trade union archives and *Sovkhoznaia gazeta* ('State Farm Newspaper').

Inevitably patterns varied across farms, districts and provinces. Although the focus here falls on resistance, it must be noted that there were processes of accommodation, too. Trade unions on state farms, for example, were sometimes most solicitous of Stakhanovites' needs. Similarly, the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture conducted detailed surveys of Stakhanovites' work schedules, living standards and requirements. Space does not permit discussion of these themes here, however. Our object is twofold: to categorise various forms of peasant resistance to Stakhanovism, and to attempt to account for them.<sup>3</sup>

### Problems of Definition

In the field of peasant studies, the methodological problems of discussing rural opposition or resistance to policies have been well aired. Numerous questions can be raised, such as whether acts must be communal rather than individual to be classified as resistance and how to dissect subtle mixes of outward compliance and tentative resistance. For the purpose of this chapter, resistance is defined as acts of individuals or groups which belittle, demean, insult, threaten, harm, maim or kill. Some definitions include the word 'intentionally'.<sup>4</sup> While one expects that such acts are indeed intentional, establishing the precise nature of intent sixty years later is hazardous. Thus, in my definition the thorny question of intention remains open. One cannot establish beyond a reasonable doubt whether a peasant slandered or beat a Stakhanovite just because the latter was a Stakhanovite rather

than because the assailant was drunk and would have picked on anyone at hand, had long disliked the Stakhanovite in any case, or was settling an old score, now disguised as anger against Stakhanovism. So, while recognising that some attacks on Stakhanovites may have been independent of hostility to the movement *per se*, I none the less assume that most hostile acts were directed against Stakhanovism and its perceived role in Soviet society.

The material presented below suggests that the reasons for abusing Stakhanovites were probably several, and they included the following: anger that all peasants would be expected to work harder as well; resentment at the higher wages and perquisites received by Stakhanovites; reaction against the social injustice that Stakhanovites should have preferential help in the allocation of animal feed, fuel for tractors and other scarce inputs; cultural values which militated against behaving differently from the 'collective'; and a more generalised and dissipated lingering hostility towards Soviet power in the years immediately following collectivisation, which identified Stakhanovism with the system.

### Categories of Resistance

Russian primary sources use various words when discussing resistance. These include *travlia* (baiting, persecuting or badgering), *oskorbleniia* (insult), *sistematicheskie nasmeshki* (systematic mocking), *izdevatel'stva* (humiliation), *protivodeistvie* (opposition), *soprotivlenie* (resistance), *ozhestochenoe soprotivlenie* (fierce resistance), *sabotazh* (sabotage), *prepiatstvie* (obstacle), *diskreditirovanie stakhanovskikh metodov raboty* (discrediting Stakhanovite work methods) and *ugrozy* (threats).

Resistance to Stakhanovism can usefully be categorised along a continuum of undermining behaviour as follows: condemnations and rumours behind Stakhanovites' backs; direct belittling, humiliation and baiting; victimisation at work by those in authority; acts of sabotage against Stakhanovites' machines, animals, land and homes; threats of physical violence; and actual violence.

Taken together, the sources provide graphic details. For the purpose of illustration here, I have selected stories which are either

representative of an apparent pattern (of which there are numerous examples) or tales which are especially vivid.

### **Gossip and Resentment**

A clear example of gossip is provided by remarks about Pasha Angelina. Not only did she dare to work very hard, but even worse, she donned dungarees, drove a tractor and challenged traditional gender roles. Apparently, 'pious old women used to spit on seeing "shameless Pasha" in an overall sitting at the tractor wheel'.<sup>5</sup>

Gossip was often especially biting after peasants had made pledges to attain higher targets. After Mariia Demchenko in 1935 promised Stalin at the Second Congress of Kolkhoz Shock Workers that she would pick 500 centners of sugar-beet per hectare, peasants on her farm criticised her for wanting to 'outstrip' everyone else.<sup>6</sup> As instigator of the 500ers (*piatsotentsy*), she was inappropriately breaking out of the collective and perceived as wanting to be 'better'. Traditional values demanded conformity, not a challenge to 'social justice'. There was also suspicion that Demchenko was not really as good as had been claimed.<sup>7</sup>

Rather different 'incorrect rumours' circulated about the Stakhanovite tractor driver Frantsev, who, since arriving on his farm in 1932, had always been a good worker and became a Stakhanovite in his speedy repair of tractors. In 1936, the malicious Petrov put it about that Frantsev had deserted from the Red Army during the Civil War and had taken to banditry.<sup>8</sup> By discrediting someone's past, peasants could attempt to tarnish a Stakhanovite's current image. This was especially the case in a political system in which one was accountable for one's political behaviour in the past and frequently judged according to social origin. Peasants could thus manipulate the rules of the system to their advantage, by trying to discredit their target according to the regime's value system. In this case, however, socialist justice was meted out to the errant Petrov, who received a sentence of three years' deprivation of freedom under Article 73 of the Criminal Code.<sup>9</sup>

A more generalised rumour began in 1936 in Belotserkovskii *raion* in Ukraine after the death of a 500er from a collective farm. Sources do not indicate how she died, but her death was subsequently talked

about as though it was an omen. Mariia Chernenko, whom procuracy archives dub a 'kulak', gossiped that 'The 500ers have started to die; the 500ers will not, after all, give 500 centners of sugar-beet; everyone is pegging out.'<sup>10</sup> Such a rumour fed on village superstitions and implied that anyone who tried to become a 500er ran the risk of dying.

Rumours themselves, then, came in different forms. They could discredit a particular individual for alleged behaviour or cast aspersions on Stakhanovites in general, making use of social slander, politically correct behaviour and superstition.

### **Belittling, Humiliation and Baiting**

Sources cite numerous instances of baiting and belittling after a peasant had very visibly received a medal, presents and perquisites or had made a fresh public commitment to increase output to a new high. Procuracy archives, in particular, draw special attention to instances of verbal abuse from other peasants which demoralised Stakhanovites and prevented them from working.

In the Kanev district of Kiev *oblast'* (province), for example, the 500er Kosar' had at the beginning of January 1936 made a pledge to gather more sugar-beet. While collecting some dung to help her meet the new target, a certain Pustovoit 'stood not far from Kosar', unceasingly cursed, jeered and taunted her and reduced her to such a condition that she stopped work and ran away crying'.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, Elena Gardovkina, who had newly arrived on the 'Red Lake' collective farm in Sirotinskii *raion*, Belorussia, was discontented that Shchelkunova was adopting Stakhanovite methods. Through humiliating and scolding Shchelkunova, Gardovkina reduced the Stakhanovite to the point where she went up to the collective farm chairman in tears and said, 'Take my work days and divide them among the kolkhoz women. And don't call me a Stakhanovite because they won't let me live because of it.'<sup>12</sup> Thereafter, Gardovkina declared to the kolkhoz women: 'Let the shock worker Shchelkunova work, but we women will not go to work tomorrow'. Socialist justice triumphed, however, and Gardovkina was imprisoned for two years.<sup>13</sup>

Peasants sometimes wrote to *Krest'ianskaya gazeta* about the abuses that they endured, especially if they had made complaints elsewhere



and received no satisfaction. The newspaper reported the case of Ol'ga Peunkova, who was the best Stakhanovite milkmaid on her farm. After she had received recognition for her work, she declared: 'I immediately felt that someone incited the *kolkhozniki* against me'. The collective farm chairman, Shishkov, 'belittled Peunkova in petty fault-finding ways and in an underhand manner set *kolkhozniki* on her'.<sup>14</sup> Although Peunkova wrote 'to everyone in the district' asking for help, she received no responses and matters 'became worse and worse'.<sup>15</sup> Peunkova was not the only one in the district to suffer in this way, reported *Krest'ianskaia gazeta*. 'Hooligans and villains' were also hounding the Stakhanovite and rural correspondent (*sel'kor*) Tupitsin, but the procuracy had not stirred to do anything about it.<sup>16</sup> And in the same district, Stakhanovite milkmaid Shimaraeva 'had undergone every possible mockery' as well. But again, this had provoked no action.<sup>17</sup>

The press also uncovered the story of Melan'ia Slesarenko, who was the first on her farm in Urazovskii *raion*, Kursk *oblast'*, to receive the title 'Stakhanovite'. Other collective farmers responded by making her life difficult. Two, for example, blocked her path one day, saying 'You'll go no further. You want to be ahead, but you'll find you'll be the last.'<sup>18</sup> They refused to let Slesarenko pass and jeered at her.

Stakhanovite pig-tender Fillipova, in Soligalichskii *raion*, Iaroslavl' *oblast'*, was also resented by other *kolkhozniki* who snatched her Order of Lenin away from her. The farm's accountant came to hate her and squandered money that was meant to be spent on the construction of a pighouse. Others on the farm were lazy and did not bother to feed the pigs, which went hungry for 24 hours at a time. When Fillipova complained, the response to her was: 'Drop it. In any case, they won't give you a second medal.'<sup>19</sup> She was generally undermined in a range of ways.

Refusal to acknowledge invitations by the party to attend celebrations and special gatherings off the farm was another way of belittling Stakhanovites. When Slesarenko was called to Kursk by the *raikom* (district party committee) to join in the October festivities, her *kolkhoz* leader rudely retorted: 'Since the district is sending you, let it provide a horse', and he refused to provide transport to the station, as was customary.<sup>20</sup> When Slesarenko returned from Kursk, she asked the chairman to call a meeting so that she could tell the farmers about her

trip. He mocked: 'How do you like that! What a cultured speaker you have become.'<sup>21</sup> He refused her request.

Sometimes those aspiring to Stakhanovite status were persecuted for ostensibly different reasons. Dar'ia Pastukhova had spotted that the sister of the farm's party organiser stole products from the children's crèche, where she was in charge. Everyone knew about this, but unlike Pastukhova, they were all silent. At two kolkhoz general meetings, Pastukhova publicly exposed the thefts. The *partorg* subsequently came to her and said: 'Listen, live with us in peace, that will be better.' Then ensued 'base baiting'. She was accused of sorcery (*v znakharstve*) and fined ten roubles. Then her monthly pension which she received for the murder of her husband, a Red partisan, by the Whites, was cut in half. Next, she discovered that the castor-oil plant and maize which her team had nurtured was on show at a local exhibition, but not attributed to her efforts.<sup>22</sup>

Forms of belittling, then, were several. Their main results appear to have included demoralisation, readiness to give up Stakhanovite status for a quieter life, or readiness to fight against the perpetrators, and insistence on remaining a Stakhanovite. Thus, Stakhanovites' responses to humiliation varied. Some backed off, and others kept going. Accounting for these variations is difficult and must be linked to factors of personality, family support, ambience on the farm and the attitude of the kolkhoz chairman or sovkhos director.

### **Victimisation at Work by Those in Authority**

As well as being subjected to various forms of slighting and taunting from other peasants, Stakhanovites were sometimes hindered in their attempts to work well or prevented from working at all by those in positions of authority. In these cases, no encouragement was given by the brigade leader, the kolkhoz chairman, the sovkhos director or the director of the Machine-Tractor Station (MTS). Appeals to district organisations for help produced mixed results.

Melan'ia Slesarenko, for example, was told by her brigade leader, 'Dig, or don't dig: we won't count digging among your work days'. The kolkhoz chairman supported this.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Elena Veretilova, a Stakhanovite in the tobacco fields in the Crimea, did not receive any

support from the kolkhoz leadership. Rather, they victimised her as initiator of a Stakhanovite team and interfered with her work. The agronomist Komsomol members, Kernoz, and a member of the auditing commission, Peronko, openly opposed Veretilova and set her norms beyond her strength. Thus, 'the Stakhanovite was put in such a position that she was obliged to quit her work'.<sup>24</sup> *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* described how she had been an ideal worker in inspiring others. During the harvesting of tobacco, Veretilova had broken away from her team, taking a separate strip of land. She worked extremely efficiently, with the result that 'other kolkhozniki looking at her increased the productivity of their work'.<sup>25</sup> Here, resistance to Stakhanovism arose as soon as it was clear that a group of workers was producing at a faster pace than others.

The same reason provoked hostility to Dar'ia Pastukhova, a team leader in Azovo-Chernomorsk *krai* (territory) who had pledged 825 centners of sugar-beet per hectare. She carefully prepared the manure towards this end. Opposition to her goal resulted in her team being dispersed. Frequently kolkhoz chairman split up productive teams. Pastukhova was also evicted from her hut and forced to leave the collective farm.<sup>26</sup>

A similar fate befell Anastasiia Ulanova, who was the best Stakhanovite on the 'Iskra' collective farm in Kamenskii district, Cheliabinsk *oblast'*. Ulanova reported as follows:

When I pledged to gather 50 centners of grain per hectare and 500 centners of potatoes, they promised help. But now the director of Kolchedanskii MTS and the kolkhoz management for some reason decided to disband my team. They sent the kolkhozniki in my team to do other work – one as a cook, another as a transporter of fuel. After long work and preparations for a record harvest, my team was dissolved.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout 1937, *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* regularly made the observation that Stakhanovite teams were inadvisably being broken up. One reason for such a spate of articles was the regime's concern to attack 'management' in both industry and agriculture where it was perceived to be performing badly. Condemnations were also inextricably linked with the language of the purges.

Reasons behind attempts by those in authority to prevent Stakhanovites from working could be several. First, whatever the regime's

political priorities, giving preferential treatment to Stakhanovites on the farm must have been a difficult task for some managers. They knew that other peasants resented this. Second, in cases where animal feed or manure was insufficient, was it fair to give Stakhanovites proportionally more than others? Indeed, was it in fact possible? And third, did the farm chairman support the idea of Stakhanovism? Like other peasant critics, perhaps not. Moreover, fourth, was rural Stakhanovism, like industrial Stakhanovism, often disruptive of other aspects of agricultural work? And fifth, could farm authorities always be bothered to make a special effort for Stakhanovites? If better treatment broke the patterns that were being established, why bother to change them?

### **Villains who Sabotaged**

*Krest'ianskaia gazeta* portrayed 'enemies of the Stakhanovite movement' as progressing in stages. After the belittling and humiliation of Stakhanovites and the acts which deterred or prevented them from working 'in a Stakhanovite way' came forms of sabotage. These were conducted against Stakhanovites' machines, their animals, their land, their homes and possessions and their own bodies.

#### *(a) Machines*

Although, in theory, Machine-Tractor Stations were meant to facilitate work on the collective farms, in practice this was not always the case. After a Komsomol brigade of tractor drivers in Starobel'skii *okrug* in Ukraine attained Stakhanovite status, the deputy director of the MTS refused to give the brigade fuel. Upset by this, the Stakhanovites went to the director of the MTS who told them that 'now all shock work brigades will be without fuel'. Instead, fuel would go in the first place to 'those who have low output. It will be done in this way in order to raise them to the level of advanced workers.'<sup>28</sup> The resilience of the cultural idea that no one should receive more than others, and of the notion that a levelling of all was appropriate, may have been behind this. Moreover, in the event of a scarcity of inputs, giving proportionally more fuel to Stakhanovites in order to assist them in fulfilling

their higher norms might automatically have placed others at a disadvantage.

The brigade leader, Romanenko, and his eight tractor drivers, however, complained to *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* that this was 'sheer mockery'.<sup>29</sup> What *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* does not comment upon is whether sufficient fuel was available. Supply of feed, seed and fuel was a serious problem in the countryside which Stakhanovism exacerbated for non-Stakhanovites.

Similarly, elsewhere the brigade leader Volishin, who had been decorated, complained that 'the leaders of Leningrad MTS do not consider it their duty to care about this brigade and do not help Stakhanovites in their work'.<sup>30</sup> Tractor drivers in Krutinskii raion, Omsk *oblast'*, also had bitter words. The MTS director was accused of not paying Stakhanovites enough and of giving them too few products. Their tractors were also repaired late and the director showed bad leadership.<sup>31</sup> Again, consistent with the legitimacy of attacks on poor management at a time of purges, Stakhanovites identified those who held them back.

### *(b) Animals*

More interventionist acts against Stakhanovites concerned the harming of their livestock. *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* reported two incidents against the cows of the Stakhanovite milkmaid Ol'ga Peunkova. One cow suddenly died and examination showed two steel needles lodged in its heart. A veterinary surgeon concluded that the needles had been put in the cows' feed three or four weeks earlier when Peunkova had been away in Moscow at a meeting of advanced workers in animal husbandry. The kolkhoz chairman seemed to back the persecution of Peunkova.<sup>32</sup> Ten days later, *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* reported that Peunkova's best cow 'Malekha' had died because a needle had been put in her feed. Only then did the party *raikom* secretary, the chairman of the district soviet executive committee and investigators come to the farm. They all concurred that it was 'a simple accident' and left.

The experience upset Peunkova, who fell ill and took to her bed. But nobody came to help her. Only at the insistence of the visiting representative from *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* was she found a place in hospital.<sup>33</sup> Journalists frequently cast the newspaper in the role of 'folk

hero', championing the cause of the worthy but ill-treated against 'folk devils'. Prior to these incidents, Peunkova had declared her intention in 1936 to produce 5,500 litres of milk from record-milking cows.<sup>34</sup> Once again, open commitment to attaining a higher record had provoked local hostility.

Milder acts against animals included not giving them enough feed. The milkmaid Galina Shaierova in Bogorodsk district, Gorkii *krai*, pledged to produce, on average, 4,500 litres of milk from each cow. However, the farm chairman, according to the press, did not give her enough feed to accomplish this goal. And the party district secretary did nothing about it.<sup>35</sup> But the problem here may have been a much larger one than *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* reported. Lack of sufficient feed was a serious problem on many farms. Low inputs meant that animals often went hungry, and giving proportionally more feed to Stakhanovites was perceived as inequitable by other farmers.

### (c) Land

Stakhanovites' attempts to care for the land that they worked were sometimes sabotaged. Melan'ia Slesarenko, for example, put a snow screen on her field to protect it. But at night someone smashed it. On the ashes which she had collected, someone poured water and caused her manure to freeze. An unknown person or persons scattered soot on the snow and threw the collected dung. around.<sup>36</sup> During the day. Slesarenko would take manure to the field, and at night sledges removed it.

The politics of dung also affected the best 500er in Bershadsk raion, Vinnitskaia *oblast'*. Garpyna Kobanets found her plot of land littered with unrotted manure (*nepereprevshii navoz*). But 'no one helped her to clean the land. She did it herself.'<sup>37</sup>

Whereas peasants opposed to Stakhanovites messed up their land in various ways, discouraging *kolkhoz* leaders took their carefully tended land away from them. Disregard for the painstaking work preparations of Anna Romaniuk is one such example. On the sugar-beet plot of her Komsomol brigade in Chernostrovskii *raion*, Vinnitskaia *oblast'*, Romaniuk 'took full responsibility for the manure, picked the weeds, closely watched the quality of the ploughing'. But when spring came, this land was taken away from Romaniuk, and 'she was given barren,

littered, tall weeds'.<sup>38</sup> *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* commented drily that this made it hard for Stakhanovites to have a good sugar-beet harvest.<sup>39</sup>

Whereas the press supplied details of individual cases, party archives tend to provide more sterile lists of the number of cases in a particular district sent to the local procuracy, but without elaboration of what exactly had been done to the land. The Smolensk archive notes that, from May to November 1937, Sychevskii district had informed the procuracy of nineteen cases in which Stakhanovites had in some way been abused. Two of these concerned damage to Stakhanovites' flax crops.<sup>40</sup>

*(d) Home and possessions*

Another way of attacking Stakhanovites was by entering, damaging or destroying their homes and ruining their possessions. Such attacks were highly personal.

On the Frunze state farm, Ivanovo *oblast'*, for example, one live-stock worker, Stepanov, entered the home of the milkmaid Krutikova and illegally searched it, the next day claiming that she had stolen bran and milk.<sup>41</sup> In Sychevskii *raion*, Smolensk *oblast'*, evidence reveals several cases of Stakhanovites' windows being smashed.<sup>42</sup> Procuracy archives also provide numerous references to Stakhanovites' smashed windows in the countryside and in cities.<sup>43</sup> Such petty vandalism against Stakhanovites appears to have been one of the more routine acts against them.

Sources suggest that broken windows were sometimes one part of a bigger attack on different parts of a home. For example, in January 1936, in Bogoslavskii *raion*, Ukraine, Vasilii Dubin and Klim Razakhovskii

went into the hut of 700er Mar'iana Dubina, who at the time was a district rally of 500ers, smashed a window, pulled down the flue, spread the ashes about, mixed them with husks [*zhom*] and threw them on to the stove and the bench.<sup>44</sup>

They received five-year sentences and the chairman of the kolkhoz was also tried for knowing of the attack and not notifying the appropriate authorities for two weeks.<sup>45</sup>

Sometimes an attack resulted in total destruction of the home.

*Krest'ianskaia gazeta* reported that Melan'ia Slesarenko had her house set alight and reduced to ashes. This act was committed by the embittered Belichenko after he had lost his job as kolkhoz chairman. This finally came about after the investigation of district and *oblast'* procuracies into his bad treatment of Slesarenko. Belichenko was especially keen to get revenge since his earlier attempt to pin his theft of a horse on Slesarenko's father had failed. He also burnt down the barn.<sup>46</sup>

Before Pasha Angelina became a tractor driver, her family's house was burnt down because they were supporters of the collective farm.<sup>47</sup> Destruction by fire was a common way of expressing hostility in rural life, a feature that has persisted to the present. Under Gorbachev, and also after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, when city-dwellers bought an increasing number of rural homes, it was common for the locals to burn them down. Newcomers were then reluctant to build in wood and started construction in stone.<sup>48</sup> Roberta Manning has also made the point that attacks on homes, fields and animals were incidents which

commonly occurred in Russian villages, both before and after the 1917 Revolution, and apparently served as the means by which the village community and its members expressed feelings of jealousy or resentment towards the good fortune of others and sought to control the behavior of deviant villages.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, burning homes had deep roots in Russian peasant culture and was a practice used against different targets.

Resentment at Stakhanovites' rewards and higher salaries also prompted violence against their newly-acquired possessions. On the 'New Life' collective farm in Mekhovskii *raion*, Belorussia, Stakhanovites working with flax were rewarded by the farm, by the rural soviet and by the *raispolkom* (state administration). According to procuracy files, they then spent their bonus on new clothes. Other peasants on the farm tried to humiliate them and made various threats. When the threats led nowhere, at an evening gathering of young people 'they poured sulphuric acid on the Stakhanovites' clothes. The culprits were sentenced to four and five years' imprisonment.<sup>50</sup>



*(e) Threats of physical violence*

Threats of physical violence came from men and women alike. References to them are most readily found in autobiographies and in procuracy archives. When, for example, Pasha Angelina's women's tractor team drove towards the fields from the MTS for the first time there was immediate resistance. Hostile women tried to stop the tractor drivers from beginning work, shouting that a fight would break out if they entered the fields. In particular, they threatened to pull the women tractor drivers' hair out.<sup>51</sup>

Sometimes indirect threats were made. Men in Tajikistan did not ask Mamlakat Nakhangova to pick less cotton, or threaten her to her face, but they did approach her father, asking him to dissuade her. They explained to him that they did not wish to look like saboteurs for picking less than a young schoolgirl.<sup>52</sup> Consistent with Central Asia's patriarchal tradition, fathers were assumed to control their daughters, so it was culturally correct to try to influence Mamlakat's behaviour through her father.

Often threats of violence were preceded by insults and harassment. For example, in Dymerskii raion, Kiev oblast', Kuz'ma Pavlenko chased after the Stakhanovite Praskov'ia Muliar and 'at every step jeered at her and threatened to pin her up with a pitchfork. In the end, in February, he threw an anonymous letter at her with the suggestion that she renege on her given work pledge, otherwise there would be violent reprisals.'<sup>53</sup>

It seems that many threats of violence were made for two main reasons: first, out of objection to Stakhanovites working harder and thereby raising work expectations; and second, out of opposition to changing gender roles. When it was women who threatened to work well and to raise work standards, traditional gender hierarchies were threatened. This was especially so when women broke into tractor and combine driving, thought to be highly inappropriate for women, particularly since they could not earn as much as men, or more.

*(f) Acts of physical violence*

Violence against Stakhanovites came in various degrees, ranging from mild throwing about to severe beatings and murder. Yet again, it was

often public pledges on the part of eager peasants to attain Stakhanovite records that provoked acts of violence.

Collective farm worker Boboshko, in Kiev *oblast'*, for example, promised to pick more sugar-beet. A drunken Fedor Iur came to tell her in December 1935 that she would achieve nothing. Then six days later he returned and

began to laugh at Boboshko, then grabbed her by the breast and threw her on to the bench. Next Iur picked her up, sat her on the bench and began to shove her in the side, saying: 'Here are your 350 centners per hectare and here is your Stakhanovite movement.'<sup>54</sup>

Iur was sentenced to two years' deprivation of freedom.<sup>55</sup>

In the Zhitomir *raion*, Kiev *oblast'*, Domka Litvin was the best shock worker of the 'New Life' collective farm. One day in the fields she was 'spreading fertiliser evenly and from the pit, not far away, she fetched a bucket of manure for compost. Arriving at this time, the loafer Stepan Ishchenko pushed Domka Litvin into the pit of manure.'<sup>56</sup> Although Ishchenko might have done this for amusement or merely because he disliked Litvin, the procuracy report considered it part of a general pattern of attacks on hard-workers.

Similarly, when a group of female Stakhanovites, led by the 500er Polutskaia, rose early in the morning to go into the fields, 'Rat'ko, standing not far off, all the time cursed them in uncensored words. When Polutskaia defended her team and demanded that he go away and not prevent them from working, Rat'ko replied by hitting her twice.'<sup>57</sup>

In their reports on 'resistance to Stakhanovism', the procuracy sometimes gave lists of violent acts without much elaboration of the broader circumstances. For instance, in Zlatopol'skii *raion*, Kiev *oblast'*, a drunken kolkhoz brigade leader 'hit the 500er Melan'ia Kalina and the *kolkhoznitsa* [female collective farmer] Elena Gavrik'. He was given three months' hard labour.<sup>58</sup> In Chernobaevskii *raion*, Kiev *oblast'*, a drunken collective farmer 'wrecked a general meeting' and 'beat up a 500er';<sup>59</sup> the culprit was imprisoned for three years.<sup>60</sup> In Zhashkovskii district, Kiev *oblast'*, male kolkhozniks arrived at a hut where female 500ers were, 'caused a brawl, broke furniture in the hut, beat the 500ers and prevented them from going to work'.<sup>61</sup> This case had yet to go to court at the time of the procuracy report.

These examples (of which there are many more) highlight the behaviour of drunken male peasants towards female 500ers. Although precise motivations are unknown (were the men embittered slighted lovers? had they always disliked these women? were they settling an old score? or did they regularly beat up any women when drunk?), we cannot dismiss as insignificant the fact that the women were 500ers. Drunken violence was certainly a regular feature of Russian rural life. And the fact that female 500ers were repeated victims suggests both disapproval of 500er status and disgust that women were aspiring to it. Most cases cited in procuracy archives are of female victims. This may be because in certain sectors most 500ers were women owing to the predominance of female labour. It may also be because men beat women 500ers more readily than male 500ers, perhaps assuming that as attackers they would be hurt less in retaliation if their targets were female rather than male.

Particularly tense fights took place within families where there were disagreements about Stakhanovism. One procuracy report noted that as the Stakhanovite movement grew 'there arose arguments within families, in connection with the participation of individual members in the Stakhanovite movement. Arguments broke out between husband and wife, father and daughter, brother and sister, ending in various ways and in fights'.<sup>62</sup> Unfortunately, precise details are again missing. It is suggestive, however, that no mention is made of fights between father and son, mother and daughter, among brothers or among sisters. It is likely that, as with the examples of the 500ers given above, women were the conventional targets of male violence. Without specific information, however, this can only be conjecture.

Occasionally newspaper and journal reports gave reasons for the violence. The message from *Krasnaia Sibiriachka* was that class enemies who opposed collectivisation tried to bait, torment and persecute excellent workers:

On the kolkhoz named after Dimitrov in Marushinskii district, enemies of collectivisation unmercifully beat Akulina Andreichenko, a delegate of the Second All-Union Congress of Kolkhoz Shock Workers. Enemies of the people did not like the fact that Komsomol member Andrienko worked in a Stakhanovite manner.<sup>63</sup>

Here the official link was between enemies of the people and resistance

to Stakhanovism, and not between resistance and mere dislike that output records would have to increase. Opponents were, by official definition, 'enemies' rather than lazy. Archives show, however, that leaders were warned that workers in heavy industry feared rising output expectations.<sup>64</sup>

Sometimes earlier threats of violence were not carried out, as was the case with the women blocking Pasha Angelina's path to the fields. On other occasions, they were. Mamlakhat Nakhangova was beaten 'severely' two days after her father had been warned to take control of his daughter.<sup>65</sup> She was out of action for three weeks. After she returned to the fields, she was beaten again 'to within an inch of her life'.<sup>66</sup> Pasha Angelina suffered a similar fate: as she cycled to the fields one day, a horse-drawn cart chased her. She lay bleeding for several hours after the horses 'hurled' themselves at her and the cart 'rolled over my body and then dashed off.'<sup>67</sup> Three guilty young men had set out to kill her.

Thus the worst acts committed by 'enemies' were physical beatings of Stakhanovites and even murder. The reporting in the press of murders and attempted murders was rare, however. The one case of murder covered in 1936 in available editions of *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* in the history library in Moscow was of a schoolteacher who was returning from the Eighth All-Union Congress of Soviets, not of a Stakhanovite.<sup>68</sup> The Smolensk archive, however, notes in 1937 a case of murder of a Stakhanovite in Sychevskii raion, giving no details other than that it was carried out by a kulak on the 'Fighter' collective farm.<sup>69</sup>

Evidence of the attempted murder of Stakhanovites and also suicide is most readily found in procuracy archives. Here one sees more instances in towns and in heavy industry than in the countryside, but this reflects the greater number of documents in towns.<sup>70</sup> A graphic illustration from the countryside concerns tractor driver Petin, from Krotovskii MTS in the Kuibyshev district. Having been decorated for this work, Petin was 'badly beaten' about the head by a group of five 'loafers'. Petin was about to be sliced to death with a knife when a passing peasant seized the weapon from his attacker.<sup>71</sup>

Very occasionally, trade union archives cite instances of violent opposition to Stakhanovism on state farms. On the 'Red Molochar' farm in Donetsk oblast', for example, a brigade leader, 'the son of a

kulak', was reported to have killed a milkmaid, also denouncing her as a thief.<sup>72</sup> The trade union report regretted that the union only learned of this a month later and that in many areas trade union organs did not 'unmask' class enemies in time. As a result, the enemy could 'discredit' Stakhanovism and 'sometimes killing shock workers, discredit socialist work methods'.<sup>73</sup> Although details are not given, the report does refer to shock workers in the plural being killed.

In sum, one detects in the press and in trade union archives a hesitance to report the murder of rural shock workers and Stakhanovites. Procuracy archives, however, confirm that murders took place, even if many details are absent. Since most of the murders appear to have been committed by other peasants, rather than by those in positions of authority, and since much propaganda surrounding Stakhanovism was directed at incompetent management rather than at obstructive peasants (the peasants, after all, were meant to be welcoming the movement with dynamic enthusiasm, as propaganda regularly boasted), ready reporting did not fit the regime's priorities. Moreover, it may have been feared that reporting of such violence would inflame even more.

### **Reactions of the Procuracy to Resistance to Stakhanovism**

Resistance to Stakhanovism appears to have been taken very seriously by the procuracy, at least officially. Scrutiny of the *informatsionnyi doklad* (information paper or report), *otchet* (account), *soobshchenie* (communication), *dokladnaia zapiska* (report), *informatsionnaia svodka* (information summary) and *spetsinformatsiia* (special information) and *obvinitel'noe zakliuchenie* (bill of indictment), circulating within the procuracy, shows reports on resistance, discussions of punishments, and special meetings and conferences convened within the procuracy around these themes. Available reports present convincing evidence that the procuracy identified behaviour which they labelled 'resistance to Stakhanovism' and took pains to discuss it.

In January 1935, for example, a special *informatsionnaia svodka*, 'On the work of procuracy organs in the Northern *krai* in the struggle with opposition to the development of the Stakhanovite movement', reported 'fierce resistance on the part of class enemies, attempting

through agitation and the spreading of slanderous and fictitious rumours, to discredit Stakhanovite work methods'.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, a *dokladnaia zapiska*, 'On the work of the procuracy in the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic in the struggle against sabotage of the Stakhanovite movement in industry and in agriculture in the BSSR', showed that special ten-day courses and conferences on the subject were held, involving nineteen district procuracies.<sup>75</sup> An *informatsionnyi doklad* from the procurator of Voronezh *oblast'* to the republic procurator reported that there had been 'sorties of the class enemy against Stakhanovites' in Tambov and Lipetskii districts as well as in the city of Voronezh. In fact, in Tambov *raion* there had been 'a whole series of sorties of the class enemy with the aim of undermining the Stakhanovite movement'.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, from the procurator of Sverdlovsk *oblast'* to the republic procurator came a report, 'On the work of Sverdlovsk *oblast'* procuracy concerning resistance to the Stakhanovite movement'.<sup>77</sup>

An *informatsionnyi doklad* from Kiev *oblast'* in January 1936 also discussed 'threats in relation to the 500ers' and broke these down into three categories: insults; systematic mocking; and beatings and slaughter (*poboi*).<sup>78</sup> Apparently in Kiev *oblast'*, in January 1936 there were 412 cases of 'hooliganism', many of which were acts in the countryside against the 500ers.<sup>79</sup> In January 1936, on the 7th, 8th and 23rd of the month, special meetings of district procuracies were convened in Kiev *oblast'* to discuss the appropriate punishment for different forms of resistance to Stakhanovism.<sup>80</sup>

A detailed *otchet* sent from Kiev *oblast'* to the infamous Andrei Vyshinskii, Procurator of the USSR, analysed legal cases against opponents of Stakhanovism covering the period December 1935–15 May 1936. As Table 10.1 shows, the number of offenders facing trial increased steadily in January and February 1936, peaking in April. Ninety-two of these 139 were then sent to trial and 21 of them were redefined as unconnected with opposition to the Stakhanovite movement.<sup>81</sup>

In analysing these data, the *otchet* claimed that figures were higher in March and April owing to 'a more tense production situation'.<sup>82</sup> By contrast, December, January and February were 'preparatory months' where tension was less. In the earlier months, it was suggested, the enemies of the 500ers tried to bring about their 'psychological

*Table 10.1 Cases of opponents of Stakhanovism coming to the attention of Kiev oblast' procurator to be considered for trial*

Month	Number of cases
December 1935	3
January 1936	14
February 1936	24
March 1936	43
April 1936	46
May 1936	9
Total	139

*Source:* GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 261.

demoralisation' through threats, slander, mockery and humiliation, whereas subsequently there was 'spontaneous wrecking of the productive activity of the agricultural Stakhanovites'.<sup>83</sup> The month of May constituted the 'third period' and witnessed few cases since opponents of Stakhanovism were seen to be brought to court. The procuracy considered this to be a deterrent.

Thus, the procuracy collected information on resistance to Stakhanovism, classified it, discussed it internally, wrote about it to party institutions and to the procuracy at the next higher administrative level and held meetings and conferences on it. Although particular local procuracies were often picked out by the press and accused of neglecting cases of resistance to Stakhanovism, there is evidence that in some *oblasts*, at least informally, discussions were held. The question of the extent to which actions matched words is hard to answer with precision. A reasonable conclusion, given the available evidence, would be that resistance to Stakhanovism was not ignored by the procuracy and probably varied in nature and style across republics, provinces and districts.

The People's Commissariat of Justice, moreover, would not allow procuracies to ignore resistance to Stakhanovism. N. Krylenko sent letters to courts at all administrative levels with the message that Stakhanovism

imposes upon the organs of justice the politically responsible task of struggling with what hinders the Stakhanovite movement and or defending the productive and cultural interests of Stakhanovites at work and in daily life.<sup>84</sup>

He made special reference to 'terrorist acts', 'sabotage, threats, slander and mockery' and informed procuracies that circulars were being sent out with instructions on which acts qualified for sentencing under the relevant articles of the Criminal Code. Particular attention had to be paid to Articles 58-7, 58-8, 58-10, 58-14, 73 parts 1 and 2, 100 and 111.<sup>85</sup> Krylenko also noted that a conference was being convened under the Commissariat of Justice for procurators from Moscow, Leningrad and the Ivanovo industrial *oblasts*, Saratov and Gorkii *krais*, and the Mordvinian and Udmurt autonomous republics. One aim was to confirm that 'the task had been correctly understood in *oblast*' and *krai* procuracies' and that 'a strict line of repression is practised by the organs of justice'.<sup>86</sup>

The message 'from above' was thus one of vigilance, action and repression of those who opposed Stakhanovism. Within the procuracy, however, one finds an occasional sign of sympathy for those who resisted Stakhanovism unwittingly. Indeed, in this connection, archival materials raise a question which concerns our starting definition of resistance which included a presumption of intent.

A *dokladnaia zapiska* sent to the regional party committee (*obkom*) in Ivanovo industrial *oblast'* from the procuracy reported 'On cases of opposition to the Stakhanovite movement in agriculture'. This noted that as well as acts of class enemies against Stakhanovites, there were also 'not a few' cases of refusal to give Stakhanovite teams help on the part of collective farm chairmen and brigade leaders, and also insults meted out by other peasants. The procuracy put this down to 'misunderstanding by these people of the tasks of the Stakhanovite movement' and 'insufficient cultural development and backwardness' rather than 'premeditated acts directed at the wrecking of the Stakhanovite movement'.<sup>87</sup>

If these acts were not premeditated, and if harm to Stakhanovites was not uppermost in their minds, then can they be classified as resistance according to our starting definition which assumes intent? For purposes of analysis it seems that, although acts may not have been consciously designed to wreck Stakhanovism, they were conducted in



the knowledge that they would have an effect upon the Stakhanovites concerned, and an effect which conveyed the message that Stakhanovism was not acceptable to others. The actor may not have fully appreciated the nature of the result of his or her behaviour, but none the less acted in such a way as to harm a Stakhanovite.

### **The Significance of Different Forms of Opposition**

This survey of different forms of resistance indicates tendencies that existed in the 1930s. While one cannot know their precise extent owing to lack of data and under-reporting, these tendencies none the less prompt serious reassessments of how we see the relationship between rural society and the state in the 1930s. Society may have been horribly repressed and suffering arbitrary terror, which should never be underplayed. But not all members of society were cowed into passivity or unable to thwart policies. And cultural patterns were part of the resistance.

The obvious point is that many rural practices and patterns of behaviour deviated from what leaders officially wanted collective and state farmers to be doing. Collective farmers happily criticised Stakhanovites, openly baited them and through the 'politics of dung' wrecked their manure preparations. These minor acts of intimidation paled alongside more aggressive acts of threatening violence, burning down huts, and physical attacks. Society did not behave in the ordered way that the totalitarian approach suggested, following cues, commands and ideological imperatives sent down 'from above'. Nor did rural life match the happy smiling faces of socialist realist paintings which suggested harmony and co-operation rather than resentment, jeering and violence.

But then, advocates of the totalitarian approach recognised that resistance existed. Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski devoted an entire chapter of their classic book to the topic. They viewed resistance as coming, however, from 'islands of separateness, in the totalitarian sea'.<sup>88</sup> They characterised resistance as 'sporadic' at best.

Archives suggest, however, that resistance was more than 'sporadic' since local procuracies ran special small conferences on how to address the problem. And the numerous examples published in *Krest'ianskaia*

*gazeta* alone, supplemented with unpublished cases in the editorial archive, suggest sharp tensions in the countryside, disrespect for official values and frequent attempts to undermine workers who set themselves fresh work targets. Much of the opposition stemmed from the fear that, if others worked harder and set new records, then they too would have to put in more effort. If Stakhanovites set new records, then pressure hit other peasants to increase their pace. Moreover, new records also disturbed the slowness of rural patterns and introduced an alien tempo. In addition, the striving of particular individuals to get ahead, to become different from the others, jarred with rural collectivism. Many observers have noted the strain in Russian culture of resentment at the success of others. It is regarded as better for everyone to be the same, even if poor, than for the few to flourish. The encouragement integral to the American pioneer mentality where achievement is rewarded has never been part of Russian culture.

Another problem stemmed from the preferential treatment that Stakhanovites were supposed to receive. Better housing, more money, trips to Moscow and increased status jarred with other peasants. But where preferential treatment hit in an immediate material way was in the supply of farm inputs. If Stakhanovites demanded more manure or more feed for their animals in order to increase productivity, then other peasants might have had to receive less. This could become an acute problem in instances of scarce inputs. Did special allocations to Stakhanovites in fact disrupt farm life, meaning less manure and feed for others? In instances where they did receive preferential treatment, to what extent did others suffer? And if others were disadvantaged, would this not contribute to their hostility to unequal patterns of allocation?

While sources do provide many illustrations of resentment at Stakhanovites' perquisites, they do not convincingly show the extent to which special supplies of fodder, manure and fuel for Stakhanovites hurt others. But, given what we know about farm conditions in the 1930s, it is most likely that, in cases of shortages of inputs, special help for Stakhanovites would inevitably mean less for others. This would help to explain why many farm chairmen refused to give Stakhanovites preferential supplies.

Another possible explanation for hostility to Stakhanovites was that they were newcomers to the farm and so were perceived as outsiders and not *nashi* (ours). One difficulty with this hypothesis is that not all

Stakhanovites were outsiders. A second is that we lack sufficient information on whether acts of hostility were meted out *only* to those who were outsiders. Lack of biographical details for the less famous Stakhanovites who did and did not suffer baiting and maltreatment make it statistically impossible to answer the question set. It seems likely, however, that outsider status may have been one factor among others that might have provoked resistance.

Another possible explanation is that peasants *en masse* were still angered and embittered by the experience of collectivisation. While most were not about to revolt, there were those who were still venting sufficient wrath at the system and at eager communists. And Stakhanovites epitomised the system's values.

Resistance, however, reflected more than communal values, local resentments, criticism of preferential treatment, dislike of newcomers, and anger at communists. It also raised the question of why those in official positions, be they kolkhoz chairman, directors of MTS, *raikom* secretaries or procurators, failed to execute party policy. Was this much more than not wishing to collude in the unequal distribution of farm inputs? While it was not always possible to execute party policy owing to shortages, enough examples suggest that reluctance to help Stakhanovites went beyond this. Exerting special effort to defend Stakhanovites was not the immediate reaction of all farm leaders and local authorities, who preferred instead to behave as they normally did, without altering their priorities. A case can be made that aspects of official neglect of Stakhanovism were becoming institutionalised into the system as the grindingly slow bureaucratic processes that prevailed fostered them.

Undoubtedly there was local and regional variation in the ways in which those in positions of authority behaved. But sufficient data challenge the model of a neat flow of policy from centre to periphery. Guidelines issued in Moscow were frequently not followed in towns and villages. Or sometimes they were only partly fulfilled, thereby flouting the general spirit of policy. Therefore a unitary policy was not efficiently handed down 'from above'. Obstructions, negligence and stubborn refusal to comply with official policy characterised implementation. Inaction and reluctance to react to criticism were among the consequences. More useful than the notion of 'islands of separateness; is Moshe Lewin's concept of 'cultural filter' through which members

of society redefined and reacted to policies sent down to them, often ignoring or reshaping the intent of leaders.<sup>89</sup> Not only did many ordinary peasants respond with suspicion and hostility to new pressures and demands, but so too did those running farms and those in charge of local party organisations. Sources do not indicate a harmonious and even pattern of policy implementation and are rich in examples of conflict and unresolved disputes. Party policy as formulated at the centre was indeed flouted and indirectly challenged by the very people who were supposed to be executing it.

Archives and newspapers more closely match Lewin's recent conclusion that the 1930s amounted to a 'brief period' that was crammed with 'shifting, intermingling social processes that moved in a chaotic and intense historical development'.<sup>90</sup> To offer a precise operational definition of 'chaos' in the relationship between society and state is hazardous. Chaos generally connotes lack of predictability, uneven patterns, disorder, confusion and randomness. More accurately, perhaps, one can see similar patterns of resistance to policy, stronger on some farms than on others, more tenacious in some districts than in others.

Moreover, enthusiastic support for Stakhanovism also prevailed. Evidence does simultaneously show peasants who were inspired to belong to the movement, to attain records and to maintain them, even in the face of opposition. This clash of reactions to Stakhanovism was one of the social tensions which both reflected and shaped rural life. It suggests that the 'mass person' of the totalitarian system was not quite as homogeneous as Friedrich and Brzezinski argued. The 'isolated and anxiety-ridden shadow' whom they portrayed does not appear to match Pasha Angelina, the women who tried to stop her entering the fields with her tractor brigade or her male assailants who chased her in a cart. In addition, the available social space for gossip, criticism and opposition to the regime's heroines and heroes, was greater than the totalitarian approach conveyed. Sheila Fitzpatrick's seminal work on *Stalin's Peasants* has nicely illustrated the rural wrath felt towards Stalin and the quick vituperative reactions that the leader's name provoked.<sup>91</sup> 'Villains' – or 'folk devils', as some peasants viewed them – including Stalin performed unacceptable acts which were criticised on the farms.

## Conclusion

Opposition to rural Stakhanovism, then, was complex and multifaceted. In different forms it came 'from below' and 'from above'. No neat model captures it. Resistance cannot crudely be reduced to kulak or Trotskyite wrecking, as propaganda attempted to construe it in 1938. Communal and individual resistance to those who were different, deep cultural patterns of envy towards those doing well, patriarchal rejection of changing gender roles, ingrained patterns of rural violence, minimal rural policing topped with hostility to Stakhanovites for prompting increases in output norms: these all intermingled as relevant factors.<sup>92</sup>

Inaction from the authorities likewise cannot be reduced to the univariate explanation of 'political blindness'. Those in positions of responsibility had to take into account prevailing social attitudes, many of which they may have shared – attitudes which went against the grain of official policies and ideology. Not only may kolkhoz leaders have disliked those peasants who wished to be significantly different from others since their special status provoked resentment among other peasants, but also upholding official policies may have on occasion been more difficult than flouting them. Kolkhoz leaders had their own popularity to take into consideration as well as the unpopularity of Stakhanovites. And the high turnover among those in charge of farms reflects not only the purges but the undesirability of the job.

## Notes

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1. Discussions of industrial Stakhanovism include Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935–1941* (Cambridge, 1988); Vladimir Andrie, *Workers in Stalin's Russia: Industrialization and Social Change in a Planned Economy* (Hemel Hempstead, 1988); and Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialization: The Formation of Modern Soviet*

*Production Relations, 1928–1941* (London, 1986).

2. See, for example, Mary Buckley, 'Krest'yanskaia gazeta and Rural Stakhanovism', *Europe–Asia Studies*, December 199, pp. 1387–1407; and Mary Buckley, 'Why Be a Shock Worker or a Stakhanovite?', in Rosalind Marsh (ed.), *Women in Russia and Ukraine* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 199–213.
3. This chapter is taken from a manuscript in preparation on rural Stakhanovism. It includes discussion of the accomodation of Stakhanovites.
4. See, for example, James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT, 1985).
5. Pasha Angelina, *My Answer to an American Questionnaire* (Moscow, 1949), p. 22.
6. I. Vershinin (ed.), *Mariia Safronova Demchenko* (Moscow, 1938); a centner is 500 kilograms; a hectare is 2.471 acres.
7. Ibid.
8. Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), fond 8131, opis' 13, delo 64, list 129.
9. Ibid.
10. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 208.
11. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 266.
12. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 45, l. 10.
13. Ibid.
14. *Krest'ianskaia gazeta*, 28 March 1936, p. 4.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 16 April 1936, p. 2.
19. Ibid., 24 April 1936, p. 3.
20. Ibid., 16 April 1936, p. 2.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 18 March 1937, p. 2.
23. Ibid., 16 April 1936, p. 2.
24. Ibid., 14 October 1936, p. 3.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 18 March 1937, p. 2.
27. Ibid., 10 May 1937, p. 1.
28. Ibid., 14 May 1937, p. 3.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., 16 May 1937, p. 2.
31. Ibid., 8 March 1936, p. 7.
32. Ibid., 18 March 1936, p. 3.
33. Ibid., 28 March 1936, p. 4.
34. Ibid., 18 March 1936, p. 3.
35. Ibid., 30 March 1936, p. 1.
36. Ibid., 16 April 1936, p. 2.
37. Ibid., 30 March 1936, p. 1.
38. Ibid., 8 April 1936, p. 2.
39. Ibid.

40. Smolensk Archive, Alexander Baykov Library, University of Birmingham, WKP 202, l. 195.
41. GARF, f. 7689, op. 11, d. 119, l. 33.
42. Smolensk Archive, WKP 202, l. 195.
43. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 50, l. 69.
44. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 230.
45. Ibid.
46. *Krest'ianskaia gazeta*, 16 April 1936, p. 2.
47. P. Angelina, *Liudi kolkhoznykh polei* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1952), p. 13.
48. Evidence from numerous conversations with friends and acquaintances in the Gorbachev era and after.
49. Roberta Manning, 'Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II, 1935-1940', in Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola (eds), *Russian Peasant Women* (New York, 1992), p. 220.
50. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 45, l. 9.
51. Angelina, *My Answer*, p. 26.
52. Iurii Il'inskii, 'Iunaia Stakhanovka', in L.I. Stishova (ed.), *V budniakh velikikh stroek: zhenshchiny-kommunisty geroini pervykh piatiletok* (Moscow, 1986), p. 57.
53. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 265.
54. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 209.
55. Ibid.
56. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 267.
57. Ibid.
58. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 281.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 268.
63. *Krasnaia Sibiriachka*, No. 2 (January 1936), p. 2.
64. A letter to Ordzhonikidze from a technical director in the Donbass pointed out that 'unfounded rumours' were circulating among workers about rises in norms due to Stakhanovism: see Rossiiskii Tsentr Khreneniia i Izucheniiia Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii (RTsKhIDNI), f. 85, op. 29, d. 704, l. 1.
65. Il'inskii, 'Iunaia Stakhanovka', p. 58.
66. Ibid.
67. Angelina, *My Answer*, p. 43.
68. *Krest'ianskaia gazeta*, 16 December 1936, p. 4.
69. Smolensk Archive, WKP 202, l. 195.
70. For murders, see GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 50, ll. 88-90, and f. 8131, op. 13, d. 45, l. 27. For a curious case of Stakhanovites dying in a building which collapsed, see GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 40, l. 24.
71. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 45, l. 27.
72. GARF, f. 7689, op. 11, d. 119, l. 33.
73. Ibid.
74. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 40, l. 47.
75. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 45, l. 1.

76. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 45, l. 16ob.
77. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 45, l. 19.
78. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 208.
79. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 279.
80. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 207.
81. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, ll. 261–2.
82. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 263.
83. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 264.
84. GARF, f. 9492, op. 1, d. 14, l. 5.
85. Ibid.
86. GARF, f. 9492, op. 1, d. 14, l. 6.
87. GARF, f. 8131, op. 13, d. 64, l. 128.
88. Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, 2nd revised edn (New York, 1972), p. 279.
89. Moshe Lewin, *The Making of Soviet Society* (London, 1985).
90. Moshe Lewin, 'On Soviet Industrialization', in William Rosenberg and Lewis Siegelbaum (eds), *Social Dimensions of Soviet Industrialization* (Bloomington, IN, 1993), p. 272.
91. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York, 1994), pp. 287–96.
92. See Stephen Merl, 'Social Mobility in the Countryside', in Rosenberg and Siegelbaum (eds), *Social Dimensions*, pp. 41–62.



# 11 *Sovety zhen* as a Surrogate Trade Union Comments on the History of the Movement of Activist Women in the 1930s

Robert Maier

Georgii Ordzhonikidze, who is supposed to be the obstetrician of the *dvizhenie obshchestvennits*, the Soviet active women's movement in the mid-1930s, liked to call the *obshchestvennitsy* 'khoziaiki bol'shogo sovetskogo doma' (housewives of the big soviet home). I wonder if a female political activist of early Soviet times would have been happy to hear such a metaphor. The commissar's choice of words refers to a basic change in the perception, and also the self-perception, of female social activity. At the same time there arises the question of continuity of social support. In other words, were the female activists of early Soviet times the same as those who were active in the 1930s?

Reducing social complexity to the clear and familiar concept of 'home', the commissar tried to call on women to remember the role which was traditionally theirs in that context. A home needs a keeper, a *khaziaika*, who brings order into the house, who makes everything clean, and who brings with herself warmth and homeliness. Woman should bring these virtues to bear on a progressive scale in Soviet society and in the Soviet factory. A positive echo could be expected less from emancipated female communists than from the majority of women who still had rooted within them that welcome role as a norm of behaviour. Housewives especially were supposed to feel summoned to involvement.

Among the Soviet housewives who had been thus addressed, a key position was occupied by those women whose individual qualifications

enabled them to engage in activities typical of a *khoziaika* on a society-wide scale, and who had enough spare time. Wives of *kolkhozniki* or of workers were as a rule forced to play their part in the family's income generation either by themselves being employed or by working in the *ogorody*. They were under even greater stress if they had many children, even taking into account that the stress caused by working in the garden allotment depended on the season. The preconditions mentioned above were met to a much greater degree by the wives of well-paid staff, who did not work at all. A regime aiming at total mobilisation, which is straining all forces of society to breaking-point, must feel magically attracted to the labour reserve represented by these women living contemplatively in a leisurely way. From a proletarian and Bolshevik perspective it was not surprising that stereotypes emerged concerning the living conditions of these women, which were summarised by the journal *Rabotnitsa* in the following words: 'The overwhelming majority of the wives of the technical and engineering staff ... is bored stiff because of the dull conditions at home.'<sup>1</sup>

As a sequel, the mobilisation strategy of the Stalin regime was aimed at that target group, which was to be especially enlarged by the wives of Stakhanovites. The strategy followed certain patterns which can be described as follows:

Promising grass-root activities have been detected by the higher authorities, and have been taken up by way of example and made attractive and popular by special material or social incentives. The violation or the exceeding of norms – a defining characteristic of that activity – has been transformed into a revolutionary exploit, and at the same time ideologically brought under control by ritual integration in a hierarchical context. Solemn meetings and congresses stimulated direct communication between members of the target group and the party leadership and induced the extension of the initiative, assisted by such traditional agencies of government as the mass media and other transmission belts. Infused with an expectation of salvation and subjected to a mythologisation process, a campaign of this sort started a new life as a movement. Obstacles put in its path figure as a species of monster. The first movements of this type, which typically were named after their initiator, appeared in 1934 in the manufacturing sector and were named after the miner Izotov and the peat-digger Kurenev. The rise of these movements signalled a change in the

political culture: the retreat of utopia to heroic archaisms and conservative idylls.

For success it was essential that the strategy should preserve the form of a dialogue at all levels of realisation, that it should meet the expectations of the clients (that is, the women), and that it should take into account the instincts of the people. Affective processes such as identification, belief, the formation of charisma, mythologisation and so on normally elude the grasp of a one-sided order. They come into existence spontaneously or they run aground. Thus, there was a lack of sensitivity in the public discussions about the symbolic inaugural figure of the *obshchestvennitsa* movement, the housewife Surovtseva; contrary to what might reasonably have been expected, the movement was not named after her.

A real dialogue cannot be held in the absence of the assumption that the people addressed by the rulers have a certain autonomy and are to a certain degree allowed to pursue their own interests. Both can be observed when the movement of female activists was initiated. Formulating their proclamation to all the wives of engineers and technicians in heavy industry, the participants of the great Congress of Female Activists in Moscow in May 1936 insisted on their independence: 'We shouldn't be tied to any existing organisations ... For development we need absolute freedom of action in taking initiatives and in creative expression'.<sup>2</sup> The journal *Obshchestvennitsa* spoke about the 'spontaneity' of the movement which was 'inevitable at the outset'.<sup>3</sup> Participants at the Congress liked to talk about their self-consciousness, about the spontaneously emerging 'bold faith in their own might [power]'.<sup>4</sup> The wife of a miner appealed to Commissar Kaganovich: 'Lazar' Moiseevich completely correctly told us that we should connect our social tasks with our personal interests as an *obshchestvennitsa*'.<sup>5</sup> Over and over again, the housewives were told not to lose sight of 'their personal careers and their personal development'.<sup>6</sup>

The *obshchestvennitsy* were depicted as 'new women', 'new cadres', which rose from backward housewives<sup>7</sup> to become a 'mighty force in the battle for a ... new cultural lifestyle'.<sup>8</sup> The awakening of that force was described as a feat of Commissar Ordzhonikidze: 'Sergo carefully cherished and protected his new cadres and educated them. ... Like a Bolshevik Sergo tutored that new class of people, which our

Communist Party led in the battle for building a new society, for creating a new lifestyle.<sup>9</sup> We frequently encounter recourse to the 'gardener' metaphor. The final document of the first Congress of Female Activists in Moscow tells us, for example: 'The first weak sprouts of our movement had hardly appeared when Comrade Sergo already recognised them'.<sup>10</sup> Ordzhonikidze was widely considered as the 'inspirer of that extremely remarkable movement',<sup>11</sup> the 'stimulator, who subsequently brought to it a real Bolshevik dimension'.<sup>12</sup> It soon corresponded to the Stakhanovite movement and was in the news as the 'glorious army of our *obshchestvennitsy*'.<sup>13</sup>

Another canonical explanation of the origin of the movement of the engineers' and technicians' wives (in Russian there exists the expression ITR: *inzhenerno-tekhnicheskie rabochie*) remains intact: 'It was born because "life became better and more joyful", as our dear comrade Stalin said'.<sup>14</sup> It pretended to be 'the result of the good, joyful, exuberant life in our country'.<sup>15</sup>

The pattern of describing the spread of the movement was very similar to that of the Stakhanovite movement, sometimes even word for word: 'The movement of *obshchestvennitsy* arose not within days but literally within hours. It seized the most distant regions of the country, it transferred from heavy industry plant to all other branches of the economy. ... It grew broader and deeper.'<sup>16</sup> 'Before long, the wave of that movement had flooded over the whole of the Soviet Union and had led to the summoning of the All-Union-Congress of Engineers' and Technicians' Wives', one of the initiators of the movement declared.<sup>17</sup>

That eruptive event corresponded with the idea of a fabulous potential that was supposedly only waiting to be exploited. Sources speak about "new arable land" of female power and talents',<sup>18</sup> of an 'inexhaustible reservoir' of labour, which the *obshchestvennitsy* represented,<sup>19</sup> of a 'tremendous treasure' of unused female energy.<sup>20</sup> From an economic point of view, housewives equalled a 'fund of gold' which ought to be treated 'carefully, with love and respect'.<sup>21</sup> Analogical to the Stakhanovite movement which was intended to open up immense production reserves, the movement of female activists was to open up 'tremendous reserves of cultural wealth'.<sup>22</sup>

Corresponding to the Stakhanovite movement, participants in the first great congresses of female activists manifested their belief in 'a new era in the life of our homeland'.<sup>23</sup> In statements, they expressed

their 'belief in a great future' and their 'love of their country', and gave assurances that they would always want 'to fulfil the hopes' placed on them.<sup>24</sup> The frequent and connected use of the terms 'belief', 'love' and 'hope' probably induced a religious response to the event. 'We wives began to live a life in common with our husbands' - thus the wife of an engineer recalled the mutual spirit of setting out on a great adventure, as she looked back to the year 1935.<sup>25</sup> As wives of the railway management of the Moscow-Kazan' line made clear: 'Simultaneously with the rise of transport our husbands changed, too; they became completely different people, they became lively, happy and energetic workers. In connection with it our lives became better and also more joyful.'<sup>26</sup>

The simple attack of housewives on dirt and disorder was raised to the level of a 'liquidation of the relics of the past'<sup>27</sup> The aura which surrounded the *obshchestvennitsy* gleamed brighter and brighter. The director of the First Moscow Fur Factory called them 'miraculous people'.<sup>28</sup> Another source tells us that *obshchestvennitsy* fulfilled 'miracles' in the kindergartens.<sup>29</sup> This accords with the general verdict that Soviet woman 'is creating miracles in all fields of economic, political and cultural construction'.<sup>30</sup> The mass media were exultant: 'Socialism really creates miracles! Should we be in any doubt that the remarkable movement of the wives of the managerial staff is a marvel?'<sup>31</sup>

The typical and basic form of organisation of the movement of *obshchestvennitsy* were the *sovety zhen* (councils of women). It was obligatory and a point of their constitution that these *sovety* were tied to the factory where husbands worked. One aspect of the activity of the *sovety* was cultural work and the undertaking of public tasks. The other and probably even more important aspect was focused on social flanking and co-operation in the production sphere. In the factories, the wives took care above all of the canteens which very often presented a dismal picture with regard to both the building itself and the quality of meals. Measures for maintaining order and hygiene were also taken concerning workers' dormitories and factory shops, directly at the husband's working place. Sometimes a situation can even be found when a wife acted as her husband's assistant. There were some initiatives which were specially aimed to relieve female workers. In this we can see a form of female solidarity. Many measures had

the aim of alleviating the malnutrition of the workers. Many examples refer to lobbying subcontractors. Thus, the wives tried to reduce stoppages at their husbands' work-places, since these led to a reduction in their wages. If production reached a bottleneck, the wives lent a helping hand in order to secure plan fulfilment. We also find members of the *sovety zhen* controlling quality and creating new products.

Taking the above-mentioned functions into account, it becomes obvious that the actions of the wives cannot simply be regarded as cheap or unpaid inferior work. Many activities make us think in a striking way of the tasks normally performed by trade unions. There follow some examples of this:

- wives of engineers and technicians of a metal plant in Melitopol' reported after an inspection tour of the factory: 'We got special clothing for the workers in the foundry and the wearing of safety goggles and gloves if necessary. Until recently the workers were unwilling to put on protective clothing. Therefore the number of injuries was very high';<sup>32</sup>
- in an open letter addressed to the Commissar for Heavy Industry, Lazar Kaganovich, members of *sovety zhen* of the Donbass region declared that they would help workers to improve their professional knowledge and provide them with further education by arranging literacy courses. They promised to urge factory directors to renovate workers' dwellings thoroughly and to provide the workers with furniture. They further committed themselves to work for better quality in the food and lower prices in the canteens. They intended to guarantee functioning sanitary facilities, showers and saunas (*bania*). They literally wrote: 'We will note all the complaints and admonitions of the workers and we will urge the managerial staff to fulfil the wishes formulated at workers' meetings';<sup>33</sup>
- *obshchestvennitsy* from a metallurgical combine proudly announced that they had put through their plan to install a siren in the factory. Thus the precondition for a regular working timetable was achieved;<sup>34</sup>

- in the First Moscow Fur Factory the *sovet zhen* achieved the repair of the toilet facilities and the overhaul of the ventilation system, and voted in favour of providing ergonomical seats;<sup>35</sup>
- *obshchestvennitsy* took over functions in the field of insurance and gave legal advice;
- when a worker quitted his job, *obshchestvennitsy* visited his family in order to hear his motives and learn about any difficulties;
- *obshchestvennitsy* analysed the causes of accidents at work;
- they made rounds in the factories, drew up lists of faults and defects, and urged directors to remedy them;
- in a Moscow factory, *obshchestvennitsy* succeeded in establishing a model restaurant for workers, although the director was strictly opposed to the idea;<sup>36</sup>
- *obshchestvennitsy* equipped special rooms in factories for nursing mothers and fought to give them a breakfast free of charge;
- they checked wages statements and voted for keeping a daily record of workers' results in order to avoid workers being cheated of their bonuses.

This list could be easily continued.

The fact that *obshchestvennitsy* took over these functions can on the one hand be explained by the loss of effectiveness by the trade unions. At that time we can read in letters to editors of women journals of the ignorant attitude assumed by trade union committees towards violations of workers' protection laws. In a letter to *Rabotnitsa*, for example, we can find statements that pregnant women had to carry heavy burdens and had to work on night shifts and that their additional feeding had been withheld from nursing working mothers. The letter carried the headline: 'Trade union bureaucrat mocks female workers' (*Profsoiuznyi biurokrat izdevaetsia nad rabotnitsami*).<sup>37</sup> On the other hand there is good reason to suppose that workers – male and female – had more confidence in the influence of the *sovety zhen* than of trade unions. It was said that with a silent reproach in their eyes

workers in a factory in Magnitogorsk asked the *obshchestvennitsy* who appeared at their place of work: 'Why didn't you come to us before?' The reporter of that story added as explanation that everybody in the factory has learned that 'When a *obshchestvennitsa* comes, then things are done.'<sup>38</sup>

In Stalin's time, it was a dangerous matter to obstruct initiatives which had just received the official blessing of the party. The word *obshchestvennitsa* became a magical term, which opened doors and sources of money. The *obshchestvennitsy* often maintained excellent contacts with the mass media and had powerful protectors. Writing protocols and reports, sometimes even taking photographs, they made scandals public and unmasked those responsible and put considerable pressure on them.

*Obshchestvennitsy* tended to overreact when they found themselves isolated. We can often find examples in the newspapers when directors tried to keep *obshchestvennitsy* out of the workshops or to push them off course by offering them 'safe' fields of activity such as kindergartens, nurseries and so on. We can read of departmental heads in factories who struggled against any sort of 'meddling'. We hear of self-assured *obshchestvennitsy* who were in high spirits when recounting their struggle with the managerial staff. A certain Rozaliia Pavlovna Lubnis, for example, declared: 'I wonder if there is anybody who could defend the rights of workers better than I do. I am not afraid of any conflict, when I see that right is on my side.' She gave the director a good telling-off, because he threw cigarette ends carelessly on to the floor. A functioning ventilation system was installed after she had served an ultimatum and threatened to inform the authorities. Our source continues: 'The story of that incident spread over the whole factory and workers from mother workshops came to Rozaliia and asked her to get a ventilation system for them as well. Her authority rose from day to day.' When the director finally refused to supply workers with special clothing the conflict escalated and Rozaliia threatened him: 'If you don't make these things available, the Commissar will force you to do so.'<sup>39</sup>

The relationship between *obshchestvennitsy* and trade unions was very cool. 'Non-intervention' seemed to be the strategy of the trade unionists. *Obshchestvennitsy* were all the time complaining that trade unionists did not support them or ignored them. Trade unions were said



to 'build up a wall between themselves and the *sovety zhen*' and to wish the women were back in their kitchens.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes the *obshchestvennitsy* denounced the tendency of trade unions to interfere in the *sovety zhen*, especially when a new chairwoman was to be designated. *Obshchestvennitsy* had every reason to become furious when trade unionists said that the *sovety zhen* were superfluous and called them coffee parties. A long list could be put together of complaints from *obshchestvennitsy* of obstruction and attempts to thwart their work. On the other hand, a report of good co-operation can hardly ever be found.

The hour when trade unions could 'breath freely' again came when the *obshchestvennitsy* movement was pulverised during the political radicalisation of 1937–38. The movement was *de facto* beheaded when the non-proletarian element was pushed out of the *sovety zhen*. It was certainly not only the director and the trade union committee of the cellulose factory in Balachninsk who could then exclaim with a sigh of relief: 'There are no more *obshchestvennitsy*. That's just fine. One fewer troublemaker!'<sup>41</sup>

## Notes

1. *Rabotnitsa*, 1936, No. 13, p. 3.
2. *Zheny komandirov transporta zheleznodorozhnogo raiona goroda Moskvy* (Moscow, 1936), p. 15.
3. *Obshchestvennitsa*, 1936, No. 5, p. 23.
4. *Ibid.*, 1937, No. 3, p. 6.
5. *Ibid.*, 1938, No. 6, p. 20.
6. *Ibid.*, 1938, No. 5, p. 5.
7. *Ibid.*, 1937, Nos 9–10, p. 30.
8. *Rabotnitsa*, 1935, No. 16, p. 7.
9. *Obshchestvennitsa*, 1937, Nos 9–10, p. 12.
10. *Rabotnitsa*, 1936, No. 15, p. 12.
11. *Obshchestvennitsa*, 1936, No. 5, p. 7.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
13. *Ibid.*, 1937, No. 5, p. 17.
14. *Zheny komandirov transporta*, p. 109.
15. P. Syptatsevaia and Z. Mirenskaia (compilers), *Aktivistski zheleznodorozhnogo transporta v bor'be za kul'turu* (Moscow, 1936), p. 10.
16. *Obshchestvennitsa*, 1939, No. 2, p. 12.
17. *Ibid.*, 1936, No. 5, p. 7.
18. *Zheny komandirov transporta*, p. 152.

19. *Obshchestvennitsa*, 1938, No. 12, p. 22.
20. *Ibid.*, 1938, No. 10, p. 6.
21. *Ibid.*, 1939, No. 8, p. 15.
22. *Ibid.*, 1936, No. 5, p. 7.
23. *Ibid.*, 1938, No. 5, p. 4.
24. *Zheny komandirov transporta*, p. 16.
25. *Obshchestvennitsa*, 1938, No. 3, p. 6.
26. *Zheny komandirov transporta*, p. 22.
27. *Obshchestvennitsa*, 1937, No. 6, p. 14.
28. *Ibid.*, 1938, No. 12, p. 20.
29. *Ibid.*, 1937, No. 16, p. 16.
30. *Ibid.*, 1939, No. 10, p. 3.
31. *Ibid.*, 1937, No. 5, p. 4.
32. *Ibid.*, 1936, No. 6, p. 6.
33. *Ibid.*, 1937, No. 17/18, p. 5.
34. *Ibid.*, 1938, No. 9, p. 34.
35. *Ibid.*, 1938, No. 12, p. 20.
36. *Ibid.*, 1937, No. 6, p. 16.
37. *Rabotnitsa*, 1936, No. 32.
38. *Obshchestvennitsa*, 1938, No. 2, p. 28.
39. *Ibid.*, 1937, No. 16, p. 17.
40. *Ibid.*, 1937, No. 3, p. 5.
41. *Ibid.*, 1938, No. 9, p. 26.

# 12 Dynamics of the Mood of Muscovites

22 June 1941–May 1942

Mikhail M. Gorinov

In extreme situations (when life hangs on a whisker), such as wartime conditions, universal characteristics and also peculiarities of individual and national character, which are ‘washed away’ and barely perceptible in the ‘normal’ context, as it were ‘manifest themselves’, are condensed and become tangible, fixed in the historical sources. In the present material we examine this social phenomenon in the case of Moscow at the front-line. This chapter is devoted to an investigation of the moods of Muscovites from 22 June 1941 to May 1942, which for Moscow was the most stressful period of the whole war. It attempt to analyse three ‘dynamics’:

- the subject bearer of the mood, that is the Muscovites (their number and their age, gender and social composition);
- the basic living conditions which determined changes in mood (material factors: food supplies, heating, bombardment, the repressive policies of the state; and the non-material: world outlook and existential position, socially-significant information, and information of a personal character);
- the moods themselves.

These three ‘dynamics’ are piled one on top of the other and as a result some possibly controversial results are achieved. This controversiality is also linked with the uneven level of research into the key parameters.

## Literature and Sources

The study of the moods of Muscovites in the period of the Great Fatherland War is only beginning. Until now, manifestations of the heroism of the capital's inhabitants has been accentuated almost exclusively, as a result of the conditions of ideological censorship under which the memoir and scholarly literature of the Soviet period was written. A break with the past has come only in the most recent years. Memoirs and popular sketches have been published,<sup>1</sup> and also sources which express the dynamics of the mood of the inhabitants of Moscow during the war years. R.G. Grigor'ev has published a representative selection of materials from the former party archive of the Moscow Committee and Moscow City Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (the Moscow Party Archive, currently known as *Tsentralnyi arkhiv obshchestvennykh dvizhenii g. Moskvy*).<sup>2</sup> These are the informational communiqués which were compiled by political information specialists in collaboration with the party organs, and which were then summarised in informational résumés for the political leadership. The network of political information specialists covered practically all large enterprises and establishments of the capital. Among the scores of informational communiqués in the collection were included the most characteristic documents expressing the varied shades of the Muscovites' political mood. The publication covers the period from the beginning of the war until mid-October 1941. The October tragedy is barely touched upon, but is the subject of a collection of documents from the same archive edited by K.I. Bukov.<sup>3</sup> The Moscow City Union of Archives (*Mosgorarkhiv*) published a large-scale volume in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War.<sup>4</sup> The compilers (K.I. Bukov, M.M. Gorinov and A.N. Ponomarev) focused their main attention on those sources which expressed the mood of the inhabitants of the front-line city. This chapter is mainly based on materials from this book.

### 1. The Social and Demographic Dynamic

One should obviously begin with the object under research. What were the demographic and social characteristics of Moscow's population at

this time? Generalising on the basis of previously closed documents from the Central Municipal Archive of Moscow<sup>5</sup> one of its archivists, O.K. Matveev, has estimated the population of Moscow to number 4,215,800 before the start of the war. It was stable during its first months (June, July and August), but in September rose to 4,236,200 (as a result of refugees from the Western regions of the country which had been occupied by the Germans). Then, from October onwards, Moscow's population began to fall. The main causes of this were the mobilisation of males for the Red Army (in the war years, Moscow provided over 850,000 recruits for the armed forces); and the evacuation in the first place of children, women and industrial workers to the east.<sup>6</sup> In October, according to the date of the Moscow ration-card bureau, Moscow's population numbered 3,148,000 people, a number which dropped to 2,476,700 in November, 2,243,900 in December and 2,027,818 in January 1942. Hence, the number of Muscovites had more than halved between the outbreak of war and the early days of 1942. From then on, some organisation began to return to the capital. By the end of 1942, re-evacuation had assumed a mass character, and by the beginning of 1943 the city's population had risen to 2,743,649.<sup>7</sup> Matveev's figures need some refining. Children were effectively evacuated twice from Moscow: in the summer and in the autumn of 1941. From 24 June onwards, young Muscovites were being removed from the capital and settled in the Moscow, Riazan' and Tula provinces.<sup>8</sup> According to the chairman of *Mosgorispolkom* (the executive committee of Moscow city soviet), V.P. Pronin, in his memorandum of 10 September 1941 to N.M. Shvernik, the chairman of the Council on Evacuation, 'at 24 hours on 9 September, 1941 a total of 2,178,511 children from kindergartens, nurseries and schools and adults had been moved from Moscow'.<sup>9</sup> This information was obviously not taken into account by O.K. Matveev (it was probably not reflected in the data which he used from the statistical administration of *Mosgorispolkom*, in so far as the children evacuated from Moscow in the summer were not recorded).

The children were evacuated for the second time in the autumn, to the east. 'As the front line came closer children were in so far as was possible returned to their parents for individual evacuation ...; some of the children, basically those without parents, and children's institutions of a closed type [children's homes], were evacuated to the far interior

of the country, to the eastern districts of the Union. The evacuation of children was concluded in November'.<sup>10</sup> Judging from all this, the figures of the second autumn evacuation of children were included in the statistics used by Matveev.

The outflow of evacuees from the city could not in any real sense be counterbalanced by refugees from the occupied western regions. As a rule, they were not retained in Moscow; their arrival and subsequent departure from the capital were strictly controlled.<sup>11</sup> There was also severe control over those who breached the passport regime, and over deserters. As a result, 10,610 deserters were exposed between October 1941 and July 1942; and during mass checking of documents 20,626 were detained who were in residence without a permit.<sup>12</sup>

In view of the above information, it is doubtful whether the real population of Moscow remained stable in July–August 1941. It is obvious that numerically it was significantly lower than that officially 'registered': by about two million persons at the beginning of September. And as a result of the evacuation of the children, in June–August and again in October 1941, the city 'aged' significantly.

The relative proportion of women in the population simultaneously grew. Unfortunately, we lack the relevant statistics, but this fact is established in a large number of sources. In particular, it was noted in the bulletin of the staff of the security police on 8 May 1942 that 'One very rarely meets young men in Moscow, since a large mobilisation into the army had already taken place before Christmas. Many professions have become female. Not only is public transport operated by women but also heavy and the most heavy masculine-type labour is not infrequently performed by women.'<sup>13</sup> The Moscow city party organisation declined sharply in 1941: from 173,000 to some 50,000 in December, that is by over 70 per cent. Communists left for active service in the army, they formed the backbone of the voluntary formations, and got the factories evacuated to the east of the country working.<sup>14</sup> The quality of the work-force probably declined (the bravest went to the front).

From 24 June, therefore (and obviously even earlier – from the beginning of June, taking into account the period of the 'dacha' holiday season), there began the process of the 'ageing' and 'feminisation' of the Muscovites. That is, there was a gradual diminution of the proportion of the population which was socially and politically active,

educated under the communist regime, and class-privileged (workers from the largest enterprises). The proportion of politically active citizens, the members of the Communist Party, declined still more sharply. Thus, on the one hand, the socio-political base of the communist regime was gradually being eroded; on the other hand, the proportion increased of those groups who were 'undigested' (and also of those whose interests had been harmed), whether in terms of age (formed before the revolution) or of social category (workers in local small-scale industry, basically the former craftsmen (*kustari*) and peasants who had been discriminated against). They were distinguished by a low level of social and political activity.

## **2. Factors which Determined the Dynamics of the Popular Mood**

After a brief characterisation of the subject of moods of the Muscovites, we shall analyse the basic conditions which determined the dynamic of those moods. We shall start with a review of material factors: food and heating supplies, the bombardment, and the repressive policy of the state. We shall then look at non-material factors: the world-outlook and existential position, the socially significant information, and information of a personal character.

### *The dynamics of factors of a material character*

Changes in this group of living conditions have been quite precisely identified.

*Food supplies.* Until mid-July 1941, the supplying of Moscow with food and industrial goods proceeded without strain: the pre-war system of trade continued to function. From 17 July, ration cards were introduced in Moscow for the distribution of basic foodstuffs and industrial goods.<sup>15</sup> Commercial trade was simultaneously introduced in 97 shops.<sup>16</sup>

Initially the new system of guaranteeing food supplies probably functioned bearably (true, results of checks identified cases of squandering of coupons, foodstuffs and so on) although the quality of the service declined. In the diary entry of the ambulance doctor A.G.

Dreitser for 8 August we read: 'It's getting more difficult to find food. Ice-cream is still on sale everywhere. Elegant Moscow cafés have been turned into drinking houses: the table cloths have disappeared and tin spoons appeared, and the serving staff have become ruder.'<sup>17</sup>

As the front line grew closer, so the food situation got worse. From mid-October 1941, we can trace this literally from day to day thanks to the diary of the journalist N.K. Verzhbitskii, in which the 'trifles of everyday life' are meticulously recorded: the supply situation, market prices and so on.<sup>18</sup>

Verzhbitskii records on 17 October: 'In the vegetable shops there were only potatoes (queues) and lettuce (no queue). There was also vinegar essence. In the newspapers there are reports of a rich delivery of vegetables to Moscow.' On 18 October: 'From 4 a.m. I stood in line for bread. I received it at 9 a.m.' On 21 October: 'In Sokol'niki Park, near the summer theatre, many thousands queued with sacks, from the night hours. They were giving out flour. A *pud* (36 pounds avoirdupois) for each worker's and clerk's coupon. People are storing up and take it away directly – sacks, 70 kilos at a time'. On 22 October: 'I have figures written on my palm, on my wrists and on the back of my hands: 31, 62, 341, 5,004. ... these are the positions I occupied in various queues. Take a look, and you'll see that everyone has such "marks of the anti-Christ".' On the 2 November: 'Sales at commercial prices have been stopped everywhere. The food store which used to be bursting with goods and people is completely empty. There are only a few cans of crab at 7 roubles 60 kopecks. The cans are only big enough to provide a snack to go with one glass of vodka. The crab are for coupons. I quarrel with my wife: which coupons are needed for the crab – ones for meat or those for fish? It's a complicated question, as crab is neither meat nor fish.' On 7 November: 'a huge queue for potatoes, for kerosene and for bread.' On 9 November: 'meat of average fat content costs 45–50 roubles from the collective farmers (it costs 10–12 roubles with ration coupons) ... deliveries to the collective farm markets are paltry.' On 24 November: 'About 5 days ago, the menu of the cafeteria still offered scores of dishes, including meat, and buckwheat ... Today – just rice soup ... The collective farmers are charging 100–120 roubles for pork, 20 roubles for onions, eight roubles for potatoes, seven to eight roubles for a jug of milk and seven roubles for carrots.' And on 26 November: 'at the market, a collective farmer



was selling a frozen turkey for 320 roubles – the average monthly wage of a worker.’<sup>19</sup>

Speaking at the plenum of the Moscow city committee (*gorkom*) of the Communist Party on 6 December 1941, the *gorkom* first secretary, A.S. Shcherbakov, noted: ‘... the party and Soviet organs had very weak control over trade and food consumption, especially in October. In November there was evidence of wastage of foodstuffs, especially of bread. The trading organisations have been selling bread against chits or lists, but without ration cards ... Hundreds of tons of bread have been wasted under the benevolent eye of *Gostorgotdel* [the state trading organisation]. If one adds to this the absence of any serious check on ration coupons or any elementary accounting, then it becomes clear why bread was wasted. Long queues have recently appeared in Moscow. This is intolerable. Hitches in goods deliveries can explain these queues only to a very limited extent. Their basic cause is the bad and disorganised work of the trading network and the absence of leadership by the Moscow and regional organisations. To take one example: if we’d stuck to the potato ration we had agreed on there would have been no shortages, but all of a sudden queues for potatoes have appeared. And in a lot of cases, goods we had enough of were delivered to a few shops only, and not to the whole trading network. Obviously, queues are inevitable given such a state of affairs and such disorganisation ... Queues in shops and cafeterias are to a large degree the direct result of this lack of control over the trading organisations. Queues must be liquidated.’

With the support of the population, control over food distribution was strengthened. I.A. Padin, the head of the trade administration of Moscow, said to the same plenum: ‘People now have to register with a baker’s shop, and this has brought results. People know which shop serves which customer, and go straight to the right shop. The shop manager is now responsible; the customers go to him and demand their supplies. This has brought positive results. I went with Comrade Pronin to Comrade Mikoian to tell him this. He gave the order for registration with shops and with cafeterias.’<sup>20</sup> V.P. Pronin subsequently recollected: ‘We succeeded in registering the population with specific shops. This enabled us to eliminate queues ...’<sup>21</sup> In December, the food supply situation was tolerable. On 17 December, Verzhbitskii recorded, ‘commercial sales began at Eliseev’s. A kilo of meat cost 80 roubles, a

kilo of sugar 50 roubles and a kilo of butter 120 roubles', and on 31 December, 'each Muscovite got two bottles of wine. But many did not get their meat and butter in December.'

Things got worse in January as goods deliveries to Moscow were cut. But the state could not honour the coupons which remained in the hands of the population. Verzhbitskii wrote on 6 January: 'Nothing is on sale anywhere at commercial prices.'<sup>22</sup> From 16 January 1942 they began to tear out the coupons for groats when handing out lunches in the cafeterias. Earlier they had taken only the coupons for bread and meat.<sup>23</sup>

But the state could not honour the coupons still in the population's possession. Verzhbitskii wrote on 16 January: 'The bread ration for workers has been reduced to 600 grams, and for office workers to 500 grams. Children and dependants receive 400 grams'. He continued on 24 January: 'You can get a lunch for four to five roubles in the restaurants which charge commercial prices (meat soup, fried fish and potatoes). People queue up for three to four hours.' On 11 February he wrote: 'The collective farmers are charging 25 roubles for a kilo of radishes ... Office workers, dependants and children have still not received any meat for the second ten-day period of January. Kerosene is still being distributed for coupon No. 1 of the January ration book. Potatoes are still not being distributed for the coupons for the second half of January. It's becoming really tough.' On 22 March he continued: 'Not even a morsel of food has yet been distributed for March through the ration cards (only 200 grams of salt and half a kilo of salted cucumbers).' He noted on 26 March: 'They're obviously not going to distribute food in exchange for coupons before April. Only 800 grams of salt and 400 grams of fish have been received for the whole month. That's all.' 'I went to Malakhovka. Collective farmers are selling good quality potatoes for 50 roubles a kilo, and frosted ones, all slimy, for 20-25 roubles ... Rubbish is on sale, and for prices calculated in potatoes. Two kilos for a bar of household soap, 8 kilos for a pair of boots, 10 kilos for posts, 5 kilos for a saw and one kilo for a handkerchief. A queue twists like a snake behind the collective farmers' sledges loaded with potatoes.'<sup>24</sup>

Verzhbitskii's observations are fully confirmed by a memorandum of 2 April from A.S. Shcherbakov and V.P. Pronin to N.A.

Voznesenskii and A.I. Mikoian, the deputy chairman of the Council of the National Economy of the USSR They wrote:

In March the population of Moscow received only groats and sugar in full for their February food coupons. Only 1,500 grams of the norm of 2,200 grams of meat actually materialised for workers; 700 grams instead of 1,200 grams for clerical workers; 200 grams instead of 600 grams for dependants and children. Workers and clerical workers got 100 grams of lard for the February coupons, but no fish or fish products. No food of any sort was distributed for the March coupons, with the exception of 200 grams of herring for all groups of the population. No tea was available in February or March.

*Mosglavrestoran's* cafeterias for blue- and white-collar workers received in February:

462 tons of meat products instead of 830;  
38 tons of fish products instead of 282;  
172 tons of fat instead of 229;  
102 tons of sugar and confectionery instead of 551.

In March they received:

532 tons of meat products instead of 1,250;  
112 tons of fish products instead of 700;  
222 tons of lard instead of 315;  
100 tons of sugar and confectionery instead of 349.

On 1 April the food distributors had no reserves left. They were only 1,500 tons of grain fit for processing in stock, that is enough for one day, and 1,000 tons of flour.

Consequently the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party and the Executive Committee of the Moscow City Soviet asked the Council of the National Economy of the USSR to take cardinal measures 'to oblige the People's Commissariat of Communications to send to Moscow as a matter of military priority echelons with flour, grain and meal, and freight wagons with meat, sugar and fish ... And finally the Administration of State Reserves has 1,416 tons of meat and 1,300 tons of butter in store in Moscow. We ask for 700 tons of this meat to be released for distribution in the next two or three days together with 580 tons of butter to supply the rations owed for February and March. And to guarantee the transport of the food supplies to Moscow: (a) to create a government commission composed of comrade Mikoian (chairman), comrade Liubimov, comrade Shcherbakov, comrade Pronin and comrade Kovalev; (b) to appoint representatives of the Committee of

Defence of the USSR to the most important points for the transport of foodstuffs for Moscow.’<sup>25</sup>

These measures were evidently taken and had a positive effect. Verzhbitskii recorded on 27 April: ‘There’s been a large delivery of foodstuffs to the shops. They’ve received salmon, black caviar and lard. The March arrears have been cleared.’ On 1–7 May he continued: ‘the food shops have already dealt with the April coupons, except for 200 grams of sugar which they are evidently cancelling, since the sugar norm for May has been cut from 800 to 500 grams for blue-collar workers. But supplies in general have noticeably improved.’<sup>26</sup>

*Heating.* Problems with regard to fuel also developed in Moscow in the winter of 1941–42. The report of Pronin and Shcherbakov to Voznesenskii on 26 May 1942 noted, ‘there were serious setbacks in the work of industrial enterprises and in the heating of domestic accommodation, hospitals, public baths and laundries in Moscow in the winter of 1942 as a result of serious shortages of fuel. Lack of coal and wood brought hundreds of industrial enterprises to a halt for months; 2,400 large apartment blocks were not heated for three months for lack of coal; hospitals, public baths and laundries were often not heated.’<sup>27</sup>

This is confirmed by eyewitness reports. Oksana Sobchuk, a seventh-class pupil from School No. 292, recorded: ‘The winter of 1941. That winter was a cold one. Cold and unpleasant. At the start our block was still heated and the lights worked. Life went on a little like normal. From January, the heating was cut off and our room became unbearably cold. I walked to classes each day with a group whose living quarters were also cold. My mother was taken into hospital at this time, and three of us were left at home: me, my two-year-old brother and Barsik the cat. I’ve forgotten the goldfish which also remained alive. My only thought was to save all these living things from the cold and from hunger. Before I left for my classes, I tucked my brother up in bed and drew down the black-out curtains. I wrapped a blanket round the goldfish tank. Barsik lay on a pillow. ... When I got home at last Barsik the cat lay under the blanket with little Valerii. ... The fish tank had completely frozen over, but the fish remained alive, even though they were goldfish. All of this horde had to be fed. Dinner was a modest one. There was nothing to cook. We sat alongside each other on the divan and each got a bit of bread. Each day passed

into another, and in that way we struggled through alive to the spring. And no one froze to death. I finished my class and began to take my exams for the sixth class.'

Igor' Oparin, a pupil from the seventh class of School No. 29, recalled: 'At home it was dark and unheated, with the windows blown out by enemy shell fire. People sat in their rooms in their overcoats and gloves, and now and again went out to walk around a little on the streets. It was 5 to 7 degrees centigrade in the rooms. The electricity was cut off for the whole winter, and people sat around in darkness, a few with small lamps. But these people were very fortunate for those times. Fuel shortages meant that there was no gas for the apartment block. The residents drank cold water and ate bread, and if there was anything else there was nothing to heat it up on. They distributed kerosene to the blocks where there was no gas, but in such small quantities that it did not even last for half the month.'

Dr E. Sakharova wrote in her diary, '16.xii.41. I went home on Sunday. The temperature was plus 4 degrees centigrade. The flowers were alive ... I had to drag a box with firewood there, since the kind neighbours had already begun to burn our firewood after burning the four planks with which it had been covered.' '12.i.42. I went home, heated the bathroom and took a shower with great pleasure. The room temperature was plus 5 degrees.' '1.iii.42. I stayed at home. The room temperature as before was minus 4 degrees. The flowers had frozen.'<sup>28</sup>

*Bombing.* Even today there remains a conflict of evidence both on the number of German planes which penetrated to Moscow, and on the damage inflicted on the city by the enemy air force. Data provided by the Moscow regional PVO (the anti-air force defence system responsible for stopping enemy planes reaching Moscow) show that 7,146 planes took part in raids on the capital during the first six months of the war, but only 229 got through to the city. Data from the MPVO (the local anti-air force defence system, formed to deal with the consequences of raids) show that 700 planes appeared above the town in that period. This disparity in the figures can be explained by the departmental loyalties of the informants, and by the difficulties in counting the enemy planes which in the large majority of cases operated at night.

The first raid took place on the night of 21–22 July. The air-raid

alarms sounded 141 times in Moscow. It was only in 1941–42 that the German air force succeeded in breaking through to Moscow (their attempts in 1943 were unsuccessful). There were 7,708 casualties during the air raids, including 2,196 deaths. 476 members of the MVPO joined the casualty list as they put out fires and carried out rescue work. During the whole period of the war, bombing destroyed or burned a variety of property, as indicated in Table 12.1.

*Table 12.1 Destruction of property by air raids.*

Buildings	Destroyed		Burned		Total	
	Fully	In part	Fully	In part	Fully	In part
Small industrial warehouses	2	112	17	204	19	316
Apartment blocks	156	257	70	384	226	641
Public and cultural buildings	No data		69	110		

These figures<sup>29</sup> need some explanation. According to recently declassified data from the Moscow city and Moscow region KGB Administration from 24 November 1941, 'Moscow suffered 90 air raids during the first five months of the war. There were 6,380 casualties from the bombing, namely 1,327 killed, 1,931 seriously wounded and 3,122 lightly wounded. Incendiary bombs caused 1,539 fires, including 671 major ones. The bombing destroyed 402 apartment blocks, and damaged another 858; 245 apartment blocks were burned to the ground, and another 110 were partially burned out.

There were 130 fires in factory buildings, of which 40 caused significant damage. The bombing destroyed 22 industrial enterprises (including seven rail and transport depots) and partially destroyed another 102 (including 22 rail and transport depots and three electric power stations).

Two theatres, three club-houses, one library, one exhibition hall, five schools, one college, three polytechnics, one kindergarten and one nursery were completely destroyed. Six theatres and cinemas, two club-houses, three libraries, two nurseries, one exhibition hall, nineteen schools, six colleges and scientific establishments, eight hospitals, three

polytechnics, three maternity units and twelve kindergartens and nurseries were partially destroyed.<sup>30</sup>

Whereas earlier figures claimed that 226 apartment blocks had been destroyed during the whole war, it is now clear that 402 were destroyed in the first five months alone. The intensity of the air raids can be judged from the statistics of those taking refuge in the Underground in 1941 (Table 12.2).

*Table 12.2 Numbers taking refuge in the Underground, 1941*

Period	Total	Daily maximum
July (eight days)	2.9 million	350,000
August (eight days)	2.8 million	370,000
September	1.4 million	220,000
October	2.1 million	220,000
November	2.7 million	270,000
December	0.4 million	80,000

‘The maximum number of air raids took place at night at the outset, and also in October and November when there were five to six alarms an hour.’<sup>31</sup> After the Germans had been driven back from Moscow in 1942, the intensity of the raids sharply decreased.

*The state's repressive policies.* The state's repressive policies were one of the most powerful of the factors influencing the mood of Muscovites, and the possibility of open manifestation of their feelings (and consequently also of their expression in the archival sources). This is a major and specific theme, and only a few cases will be examined.

In the first hours of the war, the Moscow city and Moscow province NKGB and NKVD Administrations (then separate but soon to be merged) adopted an active plan for ensuring the security of Moscow and its environs. This is quite a weighty document which refers in passing to the need immediately to arrest people showing signs of ‘terrorism, diversions, wrecking, German, Italian, Japanese and other espionage, bacteriological diversions, Trotskyites, former members of anti-Soviet political parties, anti-war sectarians and various anti-Soviet elements’. In all, 1,077 persons were seized; additionally, 230 criminals were arrested. All this took place in a few hours. The NKVD's

Moscow gaols sent 1,000 to the camps to make way for the newly arrested; a special camp, taking 300, was prepared for interned foreigners; 1,525 militiamen were assigned to patrol duties to keep order in Moscow; extra militia posts were set up for the night hours; guards on bridges, industrial enterprises and so on were strengthened.<sup>32</sup>

The 'competent organs' were very much on their guard to detect any manifestations of an 'Anti-Soviet counter-revolutionary or defeatist' mood. In the NKVD's special files on the population's reaction to this or that event the word 'arrested' as a rule appears alongside the names of people who had engaged in 'inappropriate' conversations. This campaign was apparently conducted only in the critical days of mid-October 1941. Verzhbitskii wrote in his diary for 18 October: 'Conversations were heard which would have led to a tribunal three days ago.'<sup>33</sup>

However, this 'cooling off' obviously did not last long. From 20 October siege conditions were in place in Moscow and its surrounds. One of the points from a State Committee of Defence (GKO) decree declared: 'Breakers of law and order are immediately to be brought before a Military Tribunal court, and provocateurs, spies and other enemy agents who provoke breaches of order are to be shot on the spot.'<sup>34</sup>

A Military Tribunal was set up for the Moscow military region by an order of 23 October 1941, and began to function on 27 October. By 1 December it had dealt with 3,528 accused, of whom 3,338 were sentenced to various degrees of punishment. 869, or 25.5 per cent of the total, were accused of crimes directly relating to the socio-political mood, under articles 58-1b, 58-10 and 58-14 of the Criminal Code relating to counter-revolutionary activity, 59-3 (banditism and pillage), 59-6 (evasion of work on the labour front, breaches of the black-out regulations, and so on) and 193-7 and 10a (breaches of military obligations). 838 were convicted, 69 of them sentenced to be executed and 213 to ten years' deprivation of liberty; the remainder received lesser terms or were discharged. Fiteen (0.4 per cent) of the total were accused under the Order of July 1941 (the spreading of false rumours), fourteen of whom were convicted.<sup>35</sup>

The report on the work of the Moscow military tribunal for the first quarter (January-March) of 1942 contains some interesting facts: '9,951 were brought before the Moscow Military Tribunal on criminal charges in November and December, but the number of accused grew



to 21,010 in the first quarter of 1942'. The number of those accused of counter-revolutionary agitation under article 58-10 grew from 168 to 727. However, the growth in the number of cases is explained no so much by an increase in the number of offences as by a widening of the competence of the Military Tribunal, at the expense of the NKVD; 695 of these 727 were convicted. 201 were sentenced to be shot and 494 to varying terms of imprisonment (325 received a ten-year sentence).

One document provides a definition of what was considered to be 'counter-revolutionary agitation' in the first quarter of 1942. It was '(a) praising fascism and Hitler and simultaneously voicing slanderous fabrications about measures of the Soviet government (b) praising the fascist army and simultaneously expressing defeatist sentiments about the Red Army; (c) slanderous utterances about the great leader (*vozhd*) and about party and government leaders; (d) malicious slanders about the Soviet authorities' collectivisation of agriculture and increase in industrial work discipline; (e) slanderous inventions about the onerous working conditions and low material standard of life of workers in the Soviet Union'.<sup>36</sup> Bearing in mind the reality of conditions at that time, it was thus possible to be shot or heavily punished for any expression of an objective evaluation of the situation (whether or not such severity was justified in a city at the front line is another matter).

In its report on the implementation of the GKO decree 'On the introduction of a state of siege in Moscow from October 1941 to July 1942', issued on 9 August 1942, the Moscow Commandants' Administration stated: '... 25 regional military commandant's offices were established in the city of Moscow and a further nine in the suburbs between 20 October (1941) and 1 July (1942); 13 persons were shot on the spot for anti-Soviet agitation. 906 were detained for spreading counter-revolutionary rumours. 887 were sentenced to be shot (in all, for all types of crime). 44,168 were sentenced to be detained for varying periods by military tribunals.'<sup>37</sup>

These 'draconian' measures had the expected effect. There were no mass anti-government or collaborationist manifestations in Moscow during the war (even in October 1941); no diversions were set up either. But they also had an unanticipated effect: thanks to them it is hardly possible to 'measure' today with any degree of accuracy the mood of Muscovite society in those years

*Non-material factors*

The most important factors of a non-material character influencing the mood of Muscovites were the following: (i) circumstances of an existential or world-view character (including relations to the authorities); (ii) socially significant information on the situation at the front and in the occupied regions, and on the conduct of representatives of the state authorities. This included Soviet propaganda, German propaganda and stories from eye-witnesses; (iii) information of a personal nature (letters, and news of the fate of relatives and close friends at the front, during the evacuation, and so on). All these factors and problems have hardly been studied to date. We can provide only the most general of evaluations.

*World view and existential circumstances.* These did not remain constant throughout the war, but formed one of the most important aspects of the changing mood of the masses. This will be discussed below in more detail, but we can here note the most important point: the majority of citizens were loyal to the authorities. This was demonstrated by the successful formation of divisions of people's militia and other voluntary formations, the active participation of the population in the construction of defensive lines, and so on. The relationship between the civic-patriotic, doctrinal-class and basically egotistical (fear of punishment) motivating impulses undoubtedly varied among individuals and different social groups, but the fact remains that the population accepted the mobilisation programme of the authorities. If an anti-government mood had been widespread and solidly based among the population, it would have found expression in mass anti-communist disturbances at a time when the enemy forces stood literally 'at the gates' of the capital, notwithstanding all the might of the punitive-repressive machine. However, the situation of Petrograd in 1917 (on which the German strategists had evidently counted) was not repeated in Moscow in 1941.

*Socially-significant information.* The archival sources bear witness to an information 'famine' among the population. According to K.M. Simonov, '... I read ... Stalin's speech [of 3 July 1941]. I remember clearly my feelings at that moment. First – this speech ... set a limit to that colossal gulf which existed between the official communiqués in

the newspapers and the actual extent of the territory which had been seized by the Germans.<sup>38</sup> N.K. Verzhbitskii recalled how on 16 October 1941, 'a bold old man on the street asked, "now why does none of them speak on the radio? If only they'd just say something ... good news or bad, it's all the same ... we're completely in the dark, and each of us thinks up his own version ..."'.<sup>39</sup>

The lack of reliable information is also demonstrated by the mass of 'prognosticated' rumours (about the 'arrest' of the people's commissar of defence S.K. Timoshenko and about the 'treason' of the high command of the Red Army at the beginning of July) and completely fantastic stories which circulated in war-struck Moscow (for instance, that the first air raids in Moscow at the beginning of September were led by S.A. Levanevskii, the pilot who had been lost without trace in 1937 in an attempt to fly across the North Pole).<sup>40</sup>

*Soviet propaganda.* Soviet propaganda was subjected to significant changes during the war years, gradually blending national-patriotic aspects into the doctrinal-class base. Thus, V.M. Molotov's speech of 22 June contrasted 'the German people' with 'the fascist rulers', but this dichotomy was missing from I.V. Stalin's later utterances. On 3 July, he spoke of 'Hitlerite Germany', and on 6 November of 'German occupiers', 'German-fascist occupiers, pillaging our country', 'war for freedom from the German occupiers', and 'Hitlerite hordes'. On the 1941 anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin struck a predominantly patriotic rather than communist tone: 'May you be inspired in this war by the heroic example of our great ancestor – Aleksandr Nevsky, Dmitrii Donskoi, Kuz'ma Minin, Dmitrii Pozhar'skii, Aleksandr Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov! May you be protected by the victorious banner of the Great Lenin!'<sup>41</sup>

Verzhbitskii recorded in his diary on 9 December: 'Tchaikovsky's 1812 symphony [*sic*] sounded out on the radio. This had been banned for 24 years as it includes the Tsarist national anthem with the words, "All praise to you, our Russian tsar", and so on.'<sup>42</sup> A German source provides further evidence. A Security Police Staff Bulletin of 8 May 1941 recorded, 'Soviet propaganda utilises predominantly national-patriotic slogans, and especially extols the active participation of women, peasants and workers in helping the front. So-called letters of German prisoners-of-war and fallen soldiers feature prominently in the

press and on the radio. These paint the difficult situation in the Reich and the German army on the Eastern Front in the blackest hues. The propaganda tries to inflame the hatred of the population towards the Germans by detailed description of misdeeds allegedly committed by them.<sup>43</sup>

The quality of Soviet propaganda gradually improved. It was placed in a complicated situation in the initial period of the war, in view of the catastrophic situation at the front. The reality was too bitter compared with the pre-war image of war ('a little bloodshed on foreign soil'). Documents from this period often contain facts demonstrating the population's sceptical attitude towards official information, and its perplexity at its lack of concreteness and falsity at times. In his memoirs, the tank-designer N.A. Astrov wrote: 'The first alarming and not very concrete communiqués appeared from the Sovinformbiuro ... And soon after a series of reports that "nothing of significance had happened at the front", Sovinformbiuro gave out that our forces had evacuated the city of Minsk. That happened on 29 June, so soon after the beginning of the war that it seemed improbable and absurd.'<sup>44</sup> Moscow KGB special files on the reaction of the population to Stalin's speech of 3 July record the comments of Maizel, editor of *Physical Culture and Tourism*, that 'the situation at the front is more serious than Stalin said. ... The USSR is on the eve of decisive events.'<sup>45</sup> The Moscow *gorkom* reported on 9 July 1941: 'At factory no. 32 (October district), a craftsman called Kalinin said, "Our side only prattles on, and gives away the cities. It would have been better if everything could have been reported properly".'<sup>46</sup>

The quality of the propaganda got better as things improved at the front: it became possible to write the truth. A doctor, E. Sakharova, bore witness to this: '6.i.42 ... Our papers have become very interesting, you read them with an overpowering wish to read every single line. ... On the radio today, there was a very interesting speech by Eden on his trip to the USSR, with even a hint of poetry about it. Our victories have been noted in America, adding that they should not be content with just that but should also be playing an active part, and that our front is of course the most important and difficult one.'<sup>47</sup>

*Eyewitness stories.* The following circumstance helped to increase the trust of Muscovites in the means of mass communication. At the

beginning of the war, many Soviet people reacted sceptically to radio and newspaper reports of the barbarity of the Germans. The Moscow *gorkom* reported on 14 August how workers of shop No. 15 of the 'Sprinkler' factory 'had gathered in the lunch break to read the newspapers and discussed the Soviet Informbiuro's report on the barbarous butchery of the Hitlerites in the occupied zone. At that moment, a non-party craftsman from the same shop, Kon'kov, joined in the conversation and said that there was no need to discuss this report, it was all rubbish, you shouldn't believe the newspapers, all manner of self-seekers write in them. He added, "the fascists won't shoot women and children".'<sup>48</sup>

As the front line grew closer, so the quality of unofficial information increased (stories from refugees, including relatives from the surrounds of Moscow) confirming the official line. N.K. Verzhbitskii noted in his diary on 8 January, 'Ragged peasants were walking along the street in single file, in clothes that were obviously not their own, unkempt and wild-looking. I asked, "whoever are you?". "Prisoners", they answered (peasants who had been in the hands of the Germans called themselves that).' He continued on 11 January: 'I talked with a "prisoner", a collective farm woman from the village of Krasnoe (Maloiaroslavetskii district). The fascists had been in their village. They had slaughtered all the cattle and poultry. "They ate every two hours. They did not let us into our huts. We had to sleep on the streets and to cook over bonfires. Only a few mothers with small infants were allowed to sleep under the beds or in the haylofts. They themselves cooked in the Russian stoves but did not know how to. ... We were frightened that they would set fire to our homes. They demanded to see the collective farm chairman. She was a woman, in her eighth month of pregnancy. We led her in, the officer saw her big bellied, burst out laughing and let her go. They touched no one, did not dig around in the ground and did not search for hidden valuables. When they left, they burned down the village. At the request of the women, they left two houses intact, so that there would be somewhere for the children to take shelter. But three *versts* away, the Germans hanged people, flogged and mocked at them, killed a teacher and the collective farm chairman, and raped girls.'<sup>49</sup>

Muscovites constantly focused their attention on the conduct of the occupiers. On 24 April, a report by the party organs stated: 'Much is

said about the barbarity of the fascists. The majority are alarmed, but there are individuals who express doubt and there is even some direct pro-fascist agitation.’<sup>50</sup>

Such doubts and ‘agitation’ did not survive contact with reality. According to the sculptor N.P. Gavrilov, who was in Rokossovskii’s army in the winter of 1941, ‘When we took the village of Dedovo, I was brought face to face with the facts of fascist barbarity, about which I had been a bit sceptical beforehand – somehow not believing it could be as it in fact was. ... I heard a terrible cry coming from a barn on the outskirts of the village. The door of the barn swung open and Maslenov, the head of the political section, came out carrying a barefooted, ragged girl in his arms, who was uttering terrible cries all the time and begging him to kill her. ... It turned out that five Germans had raped the girl during the battle for this village. She was 13. And after that they had thrust a broken bottle into her sexual organs. She died in the car from loss of blood. They did not get her to Moscow. ... Entering one hut (the village had been only partly burnt down), I saw a woman lying before me by a heap of firewood, covered by matting. A two-year-old child lay near her. Her legs were visible from under the matting. I lifted up the matting and recoiled in horror. The child’s skull was split in half, like an egg. An old woman who lived next door told me the whole story. It seems that the woman was a widow, and that five Germans were quartered in her hut. She did their washing, and cooked for them. She had a child, it was obviously ill, did not sleep and cried. One of the Germans got up and went over to the child, took it from the mother and struck it on the edge of the stove. Ignoring the cries of the mother, he threw it out into the street, already dead. The mother threw herself at the German. He shot her and threw her out into the yard. I remember that Maslenov’s face became grey when recalling this girl and talking about the woman, even though he was always rosy-faced and full of the joys of life.’<sup>51</sup>

N.A. Astrov recalled, ‘I had a clear image of Germans. A German was fat, good-natured, usually relaxed but tight with his money, with a tankard of beer always in his hand, with a wife who was an excellent housewife, always busy in the kitchen and glad to ask her friends around for a meal. To my astonishment, the stories of refugees from the occupied territories did not correspond to this image, and I initially simply did not believe what had been done by these people who had

been re-educated by fascism. The genuine face of our enemy became clear later, after a few months of the war. It turned out that these were not people, nor even beasts, since any beast, even the most carnivorous, would be grossly offended to be equated with Germans.<sup>52</sup>

*German propaganda.* The influence of German propaganda (through radio broadcasts, leaflets and agitators) fell as the situation at the front improved, the flow of information compromising the enemy increased, the security of the regime in the capital grew, and trust in official Soviet communiqués increased. For the first period of the war (up to October–November), one quite frequently comes across references which are sympathetic in tone towards German radio broadcasts and enemy leaflets (the essence of German propaganda was: ‘we are fighting not against the Russian people, but against the Jews and communists’).<sup>53</sup> Thereafter, these became rarer and rarer.

*Information of a personal character.* No research has been carried out on this topic. But to get some feel for that atmosphere of corrosive alarm for their close ones, which gripped Muscovites without even a minute’s break, the reader is advised to read E. Sakharova’s diary, a document which is terrifying in its force.<sup>54</sup>

*Demographic indicators.* Demographic statistics provide the synthesising indicator which most objectively expresses the general dynamic of living conditions. This is especially true of the mortality rates; birth statistics are less representative, since women, and especially those who were pregnant, were the first to be sent to the east. In the pre-war years of 1939, 1940 and the first half of 1941, the general mortality rate in Moscow ranged between 10 and 15 persons per thousand. 60,531 died in the capital in 1939, and 67,520 in 1940.

The first half of 1941 was quite ‘favourable’ in terms of mortality – not over 12 persons per thousand. The rate began to grow in the last three months of 1941. A total of 50,571 died in that year. Mortality rates shot up in March, April and May 1942: to 25, 34 and 33 persons per thousand respectively. They began to decline slowly from June 1942, to 24 per thousand by the end of the year. Thus, compared with the pre-war period, mortality had doubled by spring 1942; 82,284 died in the course of 1942, at an annual rate of 27.6 per thousand.

The increase in mortality is probably partially explained by the general ageing of Moscow's population. Evidence of this is provided by the change in the age composition of those dying in 1939, 1940 and 1942. In 1939, 42.3 per cent of the deaths were among men and women over 40, against 45.4 per cent in 1940 and 69.4 per cent in 1942. Children under 14 formed 45.3 per cent of the total in 1939 and 45.1 per cent in 1940, against only 18.4 per cent in 1942.

But obviously the decisive factor in the growth of mortality was the worsening of the material and moral (stress factor) condition of the lives of Muscovites. Statistics on the causes of death bear this out. There was a sharp increase in the proportion of deaths from diseases of the heart and organs of blood circulation (in part attributable to stress) from 12.6 in 1939 to 14.2 in 1940, 17.2 in 1941 and 31.1 in 1942. There was a significant increase in the number of deaths from tuberculosis, from 5,517 in 1939 to 5,787 in 1940, 5,289 in 1941 and 9,050 in 1942. In the war years, deaths from infectious diseases decreased significantly as a percentage of the total.<sup>55</sup>

### *Conclusions on the mood of Muscovites, June 1941 to May 1942*

#### 1. Factors of a material character

- (a) Food supplies were not bad in summer, tolerable in autumn and in December, but almost catastrophic between January and the beginning of April, and tolerable again in the second half of April and May.
- (b) Fuel supplies had no influence on the mood in the summer, when it was so warm. The situation was tolerable in autumn, almost catastrophic in winter, and bad but less significant in the spring, when it was warmer out of doors.
- (c) Bombing. There were no bombs on 21–22 July, but this was followed by the most intense period, up to November. Thereafter there was a sharp decrease in intensity.
- (d) The repressive policies of the state were severe throughout the whole of this period, with the exception of a few days in the middle of October.

#### 2. Factors of a non-material character

- (a) World-view and existential tendencies and, above all, attitudes



towards the authorities were, as a whole, loyal enough throughout this period.

- (b) Socially significant information: in Soviet propaganda, the general trend of development was from vagueness, paucity of information and a doctrinal-class approach at the beginning of the war to greater concreteness, and saturation with information, as the situation improved at the front. By contrast, German propaganda accentuated racial and doctrinal aspects, and its influence declined as the German break-through was checked and as the Russian people came to know the character of the occupying regime. Eye-witness accounts increased in importance. From about November–December, after the Germans had seized the immediate surrounds of Moscow and then been repelled, there was an increase in the amount of unofficial information received by Muscovites about the barbarity of the occupiers. This led to an increase in popular trust in Soviet propaganda, and to the undermining of the influence of the enemy's propaganda. Information of a personal character is a field still awaiting detailed research.

How did the mood of Muscovites change under the influence of these factors?

### **3. The Dynamics of the Mood of Muscovites**

#### *The initial period of the war (June–September)*

The later eye-witness accounts have customarily underlined a patriotic upsurge gripping Muscovites from the first days of war and maintained throughout. V.P. Pronin, the chairman of *Mosgorispolkom*, recalled, 'the high patriotic fervour which gripped the Soviet people in those days (the start of the war) is unforgettable. Whole columns of Muscovites went from their factories to the Commissariat of War. Whole families and brigades signed up as volunteers in the Soviet army. Hundreds and thousands of factories and workshops considered themselves to be mobilised from the first days of the war. A consciousness of an elevated duty to the Motherland reigned everywhere, and strict order was maintained in all quarters.'<sup>56</sup>

The real picture was more multi-hued. After Molotov's radio speech at 12:15 on 22 June, meetings were held in Moscow factories at which 'workers, clerks, engineers and specialists spoke with indignation of the insolent and piratical actions of German fascism and vowed to the party and the government and personally to Comrade Stalin that they would do all within their power to achieve victory.' This was a typical phrase from party information reports of these meetings.<sup>57</sup> In the first day or two of the war, no real problems were identified with the presence of hundreds of mobilised (and mostly young) Muscovites and with the announcement of a voluntary enrolment into the army. The Internal Affairs and Security forces reported to the deputy Commissar of Internal Affairs V.S. Abakumov on 24 June: 'Mobilisation is proceeding in an organised manner in the city and province of Moscow in accordance with the order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR'. They also noted that enrolments into the Red Army were proceeding ahead of time. However, some individual Moscow province war commissariats were ill-prepared in this regard, delays occurred, and there was a negative mood among those enlisted. Thus, 'a recruit called Ivanov, a senior engineer at the Hammer and Sickle plant, was arrested at the enlistment point in the Taganka region ... he had agitated among the enlistees to refuse service in the Red Army.' 'In the Kuibyshev district, the recruit Nikolaev did not wish to serve in the Red Army, and committed suicide.' 'In the Lenin district, the recruit Novoselov ... carried on defeatist agitation among enlistees. Novoselov was arrested.' 'In the Kirov district, Karzamanov was arrested for refusing to serve in the Red Army.'<sup>58</sup>

The tone had changed by 26 June, when the Moscow NKGB and NKVD administration reported to B.Z. Kobulov, the deputy Commissar for State Security of the USSR, and began with indications of failures rather than with a statement of success: 'individual shortcomings continue to exist in the process of mobilisation in Moscow and the Moscow province.' Whereas the previous report had mentioned solitary cases of refusals to serve in the Red Army by two individuals, it was now stated that 'cases of indiscipline and refusal to serve in the Red Army have been noted in a section of the recruits'. Four concrete examples were given: one wounded himself with the intention of avoiding the draft, one Red Army man committed suicide by throwing himself under a train, one person was arrested for refusing the draft,

and one man liable to recruitment threw himself out of a window and broke his leg. The following phrase catches the eye, 'on 24 June, 1,800 persons were summoned, but only 814 turned up.' This was possibly due to poor organisational work by officials, which was specifically noted elsewhere. The document does not mention volunteers, but it does instance cases of 'hooligan and criminal behaviour'. 'If only seven cases of hooliganism were recorded for 21–22 June, there were 23 on 23 June, including three involving knives.'<sup>59</sup> This was possibly the consequence of the drunkenness which traditionally accompanies drafting into the army.<sup>60</sup>

In monitoring popular reactions to the outbreak of war, party and security organs recorded that expressions of opinion were predominantly patriotic, but that there were conversations of a different type. A report of 23 June 1941 stated: '... there are cases of negative and counter-revolutionary sentiments being expressed among some parts of the population'. For instance, Spund, a former Socialist Revolutionary, was recorded as saying 'the war with Germany was begun by us ... by our government, with the aim of diverting the attention of the broad masses from that dissatisfaction which has taken hold of the people, that a dictatorship exists over us.' 'Germany could never regard our very existence calmly. We helped her all the same, and ourselves suffered shortages. Now Germany is feeding us with bombs ... we have no strong and secure rear, people are disaffected, and there will be clashes within the country which will complicate the whole course of events. The war will be burdensome and bloody' (Lokshina, a factory worker). 'Litvinov's policy, which oriented us towards France and England, was the right one. We are not ready for war, we have not got enough gas- and bomb-proof shelters. There's a terrible panic among the people' (Loginov, a clerk) 'Half of the people of the USSR are now inflamed against the Soviet authorities. Many are sitting in gaol, and the peasants are in a bad mood, so it will be difficult to fight. The people will be against our government' (Grebenshchikov, a doctor). 'It's good that the war has begun at last, life in the USSR had become unbearable. Everyone has become fed up with forced labour and hunger, soon there will be an end to all that' (Makarova, a factory worker).<sup>61</sup>

The population remembered the supply difficulties during the First World War and even more so during the Civil War, and so withdrew deposits from their savings bank accounts in order to buy up

foodstuffs. To a French observer, these fully natural reactions by Muscovites did not give the appearance of 'panic'. The French military attaché in the USSR noted on 22 June in a coded telegram to the Vichy French War Ministry: 'The population of Moscow remains calm, but long queues have formed at the savings banks, at the bakers and for kerosene. Mobilisation of people of various ages is taking place, but is barely noticeable.'<sup>62</sup>

A 'defeatist mood in some cases' (referring to the inevitability of a German victory) was remarked upon in the communiqué of 24 June to Abakumov, which was discussed previously in the context of 'negative and counter-revolutionary' motifs.<sup>63</sup> N.A. Astrov bore witness: 'The radio played triumphant and victory marches almost without pause. Black and red posters summoning us to fight and to go to the front were stuck on house walls, getting on our nerves. Alarm at the situation grew. The retreat was like a flight and showed that we did not know how to fight, that it was no use our fighting. ... Then, in the first months, our general mood was murderous, especially because we had to hide this feeling.'<sup>64</sup>

A sharp polarisation of mood was noted in a special Moscow security police report of 3 July 1941 to Shcherbakov on popular reactions to Stalin's speech on the radio. In the majority of cases cited, the speech aroused 'a new outflowing of patriotism, energy and the will to fight'. But another section of Muscovites interpreted Stalin's appeal for the creation of a popular militia and the development of a partisan movement as a gesture of despair, and an acknowledgement of the rout of the Red Army. The defeatist mood was thereby strengthened, although no other 'negative' motifs were noted.<sup>65</sup>

Stalin's speech was regarded as severe but truthful, and stirred the population, diverting its attention from domestic problems to the struggle against the aggressors. In recalling the range of feeling evoked in him by this speech, K.M. Simonov stated: 'One feeling was the most important of all ... I felt that this speech concealed nothing and spoke the truth to the end. ... This pleased me greatly. It seemed that to utter such a bitter truth in such harsh circumstances bore witness to one's strength. And one more sensation. To address us as "my friends" caused great joy and went straight to the heart. This phrase had not been used for a long time in speeches.'<sup>66</sup> The severe and truthful speech of Stalin thus stirred the population and diverted its attention

from domestic and external problems to the struggle against the aggressor. The expectations of society had become focused on the war.

The large majority of opinions relayed by the party's information bulletins for July–September 1941 concerned purely military topics, such as the situation at the front, the poor food provided for soldiers on active service, treason by the Red Army command as the cause of Soviet 'defeat' and the 'arrest' of Timoshenko. 'Anti-kolkhoz' views, and the hope that the Germans would abolish the collective farm order, were frequently encountered. An often-repeated motif (basically with references to German sources) was that a German occupation would pose no threat to the ordinary people and that only Jews and communists would suffer. Hopes were expressed that the arrival of the German troops would lead to improved material conditions. Those expressing 'negative' moods included a cloakroom attendant, a nurse, a printer, a loader, an instructor in social insurance, a section head from the Central Committee of the Union of Political Education Institutions, a technologist, a worker living in barracks, another loader and a fitter.<sup>67</sup> The expectations of anti-Soviet activity which were characteristic of the first days of the war are not detectable in the sources for these months (although security organs' sources have not been made available to us).

The impression is certainly given that the openly anti-Soviet utterances and expectations of anti-Communist activities among Muscovites which were frequently encountered in the first days of the war had by now been dampened down. The catastrophe at the front (the population guessed at this), and the severity of the actions by the organs of internal affairs and state security, obviously had the consequence not of consolidating the forces of those dissatisfied with the communist regime, but of transferring their hopes to its overthrow by the German army.

The first air raid against Moscow took place during the night of 21–22 July. Muscovites quickly got used to the bombing and adapted to it. Dr A.G. Dreitser recorded: '8 August 1941. Air raid alarms have got more frequent. ... At 11 in the evening we are told to go to the Sokol metro station. Down below, four rows of people lie on the floor, mostly women and children. They lie in a set order. Each family has its own spot. They spread out newspapers, blankets and pillows to make a bed. The children sleep, and the adults entertain themselves in various ways. They drink tea, even with jam. They visit each other. They chat

quietly. They play dominoes. A few pairs of chess players are surrounded by "fans". Many read books, knit, darn stockings, or mend underwear – in a word, they have got themselves organised on a stable and long-term basis. They have permanent and "reserved" places. Trains stand on both sides of the tunnel, and small children are sleeping on the seats.<sup>68</sup>

As they gradually overcame their fear, Muscovites began to work even while the bombs threatened and did not go down into the shelters. Astrov recalled: 'The town was being bombed, but the designers and copyists did not stop work. They took a rest, burying their noses in their drawing tables. If bombs fell close by, the girl copyists cried from fear, their tears fell on to the tracing paper covered with Indian ink where they made black puddles. The tracing paper had to be changed, and the copying began all over again. No one stopped work.'<sup>69</sup>

In studying the documents of that period, the feeling often arises that the ordinary people frequently showed greater heroism than the lower and middle-ranking leadership. This was clearly apparent in the days of the so-called 'panic' of October 1941.

#### *The period of the German onslaught on Moscow (October–November)*

The Security Police Staff bulletin of 8 May 1942 noted: 'In the critical October days of 1941, there was sharp irritation among the population against the Soviet regime as a result of the failings of the Soviet organs of authority, who saved themselves whilst abandoning the population to the will of fate.'<sup>70</sup>

Was this evaluation a just one? On the night of 15–16 October 1941, a rushed evacuation of a series of organisations and institutions into the depths of the country was begun. These included government departments, the General Staff administration, military academies, people's commissariats, embassies and factories. The largest factories, electrical power stations, bridges and the metro were mined. It was decided to sell workers and clerks a *pud* each of flour or grain above the norm, and to pay a month's wages in advance. As a result of the mass flight of the directors of enterprises and organisations, the halting of the metro and the lack of information, the actions taken by the authorities provoked perplexity, dissatisfaction, confusion and alarm among a part of the population.<sup>71</sup>

In fact, as a German document pointed out, many Soviet high officials 'saved themselves, leaving the population to the will of fate.' This may be in part explained by the weakening of the cadres of the Moscow party organisation during the first months of the war, which has been noted above. According to incomplete data for 16–18 October, '779 leading workers fled from 438 enterprises, institutions and organisations. This flight was accompanied by the large-scale embezzlement of valuables and the squandering of property: 1,484,000 roubles in personal money and 1,051,000 roubles' worth of valuables and property were stolen in these days. Hundreds of cars and passenger trucks were taken.'<sup>72</sup> In fact as a result of this confusion, 'On 16.x.1941 the radio transmitting station of the People's Commissariat for the Navy at Tomilino and its receiving station at Veshniaki were taken out of commission. Additionally, the radio bureau and the automatic telephone exchange in the People's Commissariat for the Navy at Rozhdestvenka No. 1 were destroyed. As a result ... the following points in the Soviet Union were deprived of radio communications: Leningrad, Murmansk, Arkhangel'sk, Krasnoiarsk, Novosibirsk, Astrakhan, Baku, Makhachkala, Molotov, Rostov, Tuapse, Batumi and other towns. Coded and other communications for the People's Commissariat of the Navy (the sea and river fleets) come from all of these points.'<sup>73</sup>

The old Chekist B.Ia. Chmelev recalled: 'The only road still linking Moscow with other towns in the country was the road to Riazan'. All the other roads were either cut by the Germans or under fire. The looting of shops, especially jewellers, had already begun and our detachments were already detaining these scoundrels. I remember how we sent to a tribunal one of these plunderers who had tried to carry away two suitcases filled with jewels and gold on a child's sledge ... two loaded cases! ... People were already losing confidence in our holding Moscow and were fleeing the city. They grabbed hold of some suitcase, briefcase or bag and stuffed it with any junk they could lay their hands on. People went in throngs along the Riazan' highway. The exit from Moscow had begun ... it went on like that for three days, no more ... from 16 to 20 October.'<sup>74</sup>

According to G.V. Reshetin, who was then working in a Moscow enterprise, 'on 14 October, we all had to be ready for evacuation. But ... when we got to the factory on the morning of 14 October, we found

none of the leadership there: they had already left. There was a general commotion. The workers went to the cashiers' office for their pay: they were owed for two months. There was no cashier, and no supervisor. There was no one there at all. Uproar ensued. The light plywood partition walls in the cashiers' office cracked under the pressure of people. Finally, at about two o'clock it was announced that the money would be handed out immediately. It was suggested to us that those who wished should go on to Tashkent, independently in so far as was possible. Some had already left with the machinery, the rest loaded up, but not everyone could find a place in the wagons. ... On 16 October 1941, the Enthusiasts' Highway was filled with fleeing people. There was noise, shouting and a general hubbub. People were travelling eastwards, towards the city of Gorkii ... The Il'ich gates. The Enthusiasts' Highway begins here. Sheets and scraps of paper and rubbish fly around the square, and there's a smell of burning. Here and there people stop the cars heading for the highway. They drag the fugitives out, beat them up, scatter their things about and spray them around on the ground. Shouts ring out: "Beat up the Jews!" .... I would never have believed such a story if I had not seen it for myself. We also had Jews in our school, but I cannot remember any clear and open examples of anti-Semitism. There were some minor jibes, but they were mild, and uttered in a joking spirit, but no more than that. That's why I was shaken so much by this wild mobbing of the Jews, and not them alone, on 16 October 1941 at the Il'ich gates.<sup>75</sup>

Verzhbitskii wrote on 17 October: 'A clearer picture is gradually emerging of what happened yesterday (some say it was a great provocation, and others that it was just an outbreak of great stupidity). ... The workers were enraged against the bosses, who had been the first to flee. ... 18 October: all are desperately searching for the reasons for the panic which broke out yesterday. Who in charge gives the order to close the factories and to pay off the workers? Who was the author of all this confusion, of the general flight, the looting, and the alarm in people's minds? No posters or official pronouncements appeared except for the newspapers. Instead, confusion was boiling up all around, there were loud shouts of treason, and accusations that the captains had been the first to leave the ships and had also run off with the valuables. ... Hysteria percolated down from the top to the masses. They began to remember and to recapitulate all the insults, persecution,



injustice, oppression, bureaucratic mockery by officials, conceit and over-confidence by party men, draconian decrees, provocations, systematic deceit of the masses, bragging, servile flattery and self-praise in the newspapers. ... It's terrible to hear all this. They are enraged. How can the town be held when there's such a mood in the air? And again – everyone is being left in the dark. There are fights in the queues, old women are stifled, people are crushed in the shops, the youth act like gangsters, and policemen saunter along the pavements in groups of two to four and smoke. "We have no instructions." Yes, 16 October 1941 goes down as a most shameful date in the history of Moscow, a date of cowardice, confusion and treachery. And who thrust this date and shame on us? The people who had first sounded forth about heroism, resolution, duty and honour. ... Shamefully, it was along the Enthusiasts' Highway that the cars of yesterday's "enthusiasts" that day passed eastwards, loaded down with nickel-plated beds, leather suitcases, carpets, and boxes big-bellied with the banknotes and fat meat of the owners of all this jumble. ... And now they tell me that at the Abel'man gates the crowd has itself held back the fugitives and dragged them out of their cars. The crowd is always honest, for better or for worse.<sup>76</sup>

One more document will be cited: a report by M.I. Zhuravlev, head of the NKVD in Moscow city and province, on the population's reaction to the enemy's approach to the city on 18 October 1941. It notes that 'anarchistic tendencies manifested themselves on 16 and 17 October 1941 among sections of the workers in a series of enterprises in Moscow and the Moscow province'. In what ways was this 'anarchism' expressed? The workers demanded payment of the wages due to them, they did not allow their managers to leave Moscow, they got drunk, they pillaged property (mostly for spirits), and tried to smash up machinery. In all, 39 'manifestations' were enumerated. Only four of these can, by stretching a point, be categorised as political: (i) on 17 October, the day after getting drunk with a couple of friends, a fitter called Nekrasov from the Moscow motorcycle factory 'together with those same persons conducted group counter-revolutionary agitation of a pogrom character near the garage of the factory, and called on the workers to destroy the Jews'; (ii) 'at factory No. 8 (in the Mytishchinskii district) about a thousand workers tried to get into the courtyard. Individuals carried out sharply counter-revolutionary

agitation and called for the factory to be smashed up'; (iii) 'on 16 October no wages were paid in factory No. 58 and workers went there in droves demanding their money. Some individual workers shouted out, "Beat up the Communists", and so on'; (iv) 'white flags were hung from some kolkhoz houses at 2 p.m. on 17 October in the Bronnitskii district in the villages of Nikulino and Toropovo.'<sup>77</sup> There were thus four cases out of 39, and two of these were in the Moscow province.

It would hardly be correct to politicise the tragic events of mid October 1941 and to speak, as the Germans did, of 'manifestations of the mood of the population against the Soviet regime'. It was not demonstrating against the regime. The masses' wrath was essentially aroused by the mass desertion of the leadership, as a rule members of the Communist Party, who abandoned their collective enterprises. And the mood of panic was not initiated by the people. As Verzhbitskii completely correctly noted, the hysterics were transmitted to the masses 'from on high'. Under this heading, the 'flight from Moscow' was initiated by the factory directors, who suggested that workers would be evacuated to the east by their own efforts. Moreover, the basic 'hysteria' (meaning 'panic'?) did not show itself in the form of anti-Soviet uprisings, but in: suppression of desertion by the leadership; and the mass exit from Moscow, which was basically an expression of the reluctance of a huge number of Muscovites to stay 'under the occupiers'. There were also other sorts of 'manifestations' in those days. L. Kolodnyi recorded: 'Eyewitnesses recall that Moscow looked unlike itself, that people struggled to get into the centre and on to the main streets, and swept up to the Kremlin: the suburbs seemed to be deserted by their inhabitants.'<sup>78</sup> That is, a part of the population left under the threat of occupation, but a part, concentrated in the centre of the city, assembled to fight to the end. And it seems that the Kremlin evaluated the mood of the Muscovites correctly. A.I. Shakhurin, People's Commissar for the Aviation Industry, recorded how he was summoned to Stalin on 16 October: 'Stalin suddenly asked, "How are things in Moscow?"... I said: "I was in some factories this morning. In one of them, they were surprised to see me". "But we thought", said one female worker, "that everyone had left." In another, workers were indignant that they had not all received their money. They had told them that the director had taken it away, and that in fact there wasn't enough currency in the State Bank. ... "The trams aren't running, the

metro isn't working, the bakers and other shops are closed." Stalin turned to Shcherbakov, "Why?" And, not waiting for an answer, he began to walk around. And then he said, 'Well, that's nothing. I thought it would all be worse.' And he turned to Shcherbakov and added, 'the trams and metro must be got working again immediately. Open the bakers, the shops and the cafeterias, and also the health centres ... . You and Pronin must broadcast on the radio today, call for calm and resolution, and say that public transport, cafeterias and other service institutions will definitely be working normally.' After a few moments' silence, Stalin raised his hand, "well that's all".<sup>79</sup>

The key point here was that Stalin expected worse. Having learned of the situation in the city, he ordered the cancellation of the extreme measures of the day before. Was it not the heroic conduct of ordinary Muscovites which changed the course of events (rather than that of a significant part of the leadership)? Was it not this which convinced Stalin that Moscow could resist? In place of the logic of the GKO decree of 15 October (evacuation and mining) came that of the GKO decree of 19 October (a state of siege, and the shooting of provocateurs on the spot).

The German source of May 1942, cited above, noted that Soviet propaganda had soon again succeeded in 'taking the mood of the population under its full control. In general, any thought of the fall of Moscow is not now permitted.'<sup>80</sup> K.R. Sinilov, the Commandant of Moscow, recorded that 'from the 19th [of October] the city lived a more or less normal life. All organisations, institutions and enterprises worked normally. The city was guarded by troops, patrolling by day and night. The population took an active part in the defence of the city, and signalled anything out of the ordinary by telephone and by letter. If the population hadn't played such an active part then we surely wouldn't have been able to maintain such order. ... The great support from the population was shown not only in its conduct, but also in its practical help in catching all breakers of public order. All sorts of letters are still preserved. They wrote to the district command, to the War Council and to the Moscow Committee. Many wrote to me, from workers to scientists – engineers and professors. ... This advice was taken into account, some was used, they were thanked, and replies were written to many of them.'<sup>81</sup>

The historic parade on Red Square on 7 November 1941, and

Stalin's speeches of 6 and 7 November, achieved a change in the mood of the masses, from lack of confidence and depression to resolve and conviction of victory. Many affirmations of the mobilising and inspiring impact of the parade on the population have survived.<sup>82</sup> We shall limit ourselves to one of them. Sinilov, the Commandant of Moscow, recalled, 'before the parade I received many letters from the people. They gave a variety of advice to the forces of order in the city, and various proposals on how to organise the defence and what means to use, a variety of projects. Some letters breathed lack of confidence and some felt that we could hardly hold Moscow. And some, though it's true that there are very few of such letters, asserted that we should not resist and hold on to Moscow, so as to avoid subjecting the children and the elderly to danger. I did not receive a single such letter after the parade. On the contrary, they wrote that Moscow had to be defended, and that we had the strength and confidence to do so. ... The mood completely changed after the parade. Different sorts of conversations took place in the queues and an air of confidence appeared. ... After the parade, there was a decisive change in conversations and mood, and even in external appearances. What had happened in people's consciousness, within each person, found expression in their conduct. On the 7th and the following days, the people changed completely: they were happy, laughing, full of the joys of life and smiling, and a special air of resolution and confidence appeared.'<sup>83</sup>

The influence of Stalin's speeches was also unprecedented. G.V. Reshetin recalled, 'in those days [in October], days which were so critical for the capital, they waited for what Stalin would say. They knew that he was in the Kremlin, although the government was located in Kuibyshev. They waited for Stalin's words with impatience and hope. ... On 17 October, Aleksandr Sergeevich Shcherbakov, secretary of the Moscow *gorkom*, spoke on the radio. He called for calm and order. That was not what was wanted. People wanted to hear Stalin, our leader and teacher.'<sup>84</sup> In her essay, 'My day – 6 November and the morning of 7 November', the 15-year-old Eli Rasikas wrote: 'They gave out on the radio that Comrade Stalin would speak. That is what the agitated and alarmed Muscovites needed. ... I.V. Stalin had only just begun to speak when the anti-aircraft guns roared out. But now they paid no attention to that. Everyone greedily devoured the words of the leader under the thunder of the heavy guns, felt no fear, and were

light and elevated of soul. The mood soared upwards, and therefore it seems that the words of the leader were not simple but magical. And I do not myself know why, but I wanted to shout out loudly "hurrah", for as long as my voice could manage it.<sup>85</sup>

The 'Review of Correspondence from 1 to 15 November', prepared by the military censorship of Moscow and the Moscow region, dealt with 2,625,507 pieces of correspondence, or 100 per cent of what had been received between those dates. Of these, 3,214 were confiscated and 30,532 had sections inked out. An absolute majority of the sanitised correspondence indicated a positive mood among the population; 75 per cent displayed a special upsurge of mood caused by Comrade Stalin's speeches of 6–7 November 1941. ... Alongside this, there were some indications of a negative mood linked with difficulties in finding work, in food supplies and with the evacuation. Evidence of an anti-Semitic mood among the population and Red Army men was noticeable in outgoing as well as incoming letters: people were indignant at the mass flight of Jews from Moscow.<sup>86</sup> There were no indications of political dissatisfaction or of a defeatist mood.

The analogous Review for 15 November–1 December depicts an approximately similar picture: out of 2,505,867 pieces of correspondence, 2,698 were confiscated and 26,276 had sections blacked out. The absolute majority again indicated a positive popular mood, but in some of the letters from the men on active service negative sentiments were expressed, connected with feeding and the supply of warm clothing. 'Anti-Soviet sentiments' included doubts in the victory of the Red Army, and assurances that from the Germans 'nothing bad is to be expected. They will not do anything to anyone.' All such letters were confiscated. An analogous mood was also identified among a section of the civilian population. Many letters from Moscow wrote of the difficulty in finding food; the serious food supply in the city was also noted.<sup>87</sup> Thus, in these letters, complaints were limited to living conditions. This may be partially explained by the 'feminisation' taking place in Moscow: women were as a rule less politicised than men (at least, Muscovite women were like that at that time).

In this context, the evidence of an independent observer, Colonel Duvalle, is interesting. He was then French military attaché in Turkey, but based his report to the French General Staff on evidence received from the French commercial attaché in Moscow. He referred to the

mobilisation of Muscovites into the army, to the construction of defensive lines and to the evacuation to the east, and then continued: 'About 2-3 million inhabitants were left in the city, who will be armed in proportion to military necessity. Supplies are limited strictly to minimal needs, but operate regularly through a ration card system. Each receives a package of black bread, sausage, cabbage and tea. Meat, butter, eggs tea and tobacco are rarities. This general mobilisation of the population of Moscow has been carried out brilliantly thanks to the firm, but wise and cautious measures prescribed by Stalin and Beria. ... Pronin, the chairman of the Moscow soviet, has been a big help to them. The administrative apparatus is undeniably functioning. Moreover, 20 years of the Soviet regime has accustomed the population to discipline. There are no disorders in the city, despite the air attacks and lack of police, who were suddenly mobilised and mostly sent to the front during the panic of 15-18 October. A new military police was formed. The women's battalions which were sent to the labour front had a military bearing. There are also women, 10 per cent of the total, in the military units which constantly patrol the city.'<sup>88</sup>

*The period of Soviet counter-attack (December 1941 - May 1942)*

On 5-6 December, the Red Army began its counter-attack outside Moscow. How did the population of Moscow react to it? The reports of leaders of groups on special work form a very interesting source: in the autumn of 1941, when Moscow was under threat of capture by the enemy, many party and Komsomol workers entered the underground organisations which had been created to operate illegally under conditions of a German occupation. These were retained after the Soviet counter-attack and were engaged, in part, in monitoring the mood of Muscovites. Whole conversations and turns of phrase were recorded in these reports. Their compilers 'harvested' this information in the most 'informal' circumstances: in queues, in the bathhouses, and so on.

The general tone of the December communiqués is one of joy and a growing confidence in victory. The population as a whole met with understanding the government's decision to introduce a lottery for money and goods. Some of the arguments were interesting. 'A 50-year-old housewife said, "all this money will go for the Red Army. I hail this lottery, and will be the first to subscribe. My sister saw the fascists taking everything ..., they dragged the blankets from suckling babies in

the sight of everyone – it's just not possible to grudge anything to destroy those swine". Even the low-paid workers happily signed up for tickets. ... There was an interesting conversation in a bathhouse in the Soviet district. One 28–30-year-old woman said to an old woman, "they are taking subscriptions for some sort of lottery at our factory, and you know, they've been cunning in introducing this lottery; there are no tickets for less than ten roubles, but I didn't sign up, I didn't have that sort of money." And the old woman answered her, "you idiot, you don't understand anything about life. I myself, even though I am old, would give up everything I have, just to beat the Germans. My daughter is serving as a medical sister and writes to me how the Germans are mocking us Russians. How can you, with a small child, not want us to be able to live well?" ... One sometimes encounters people who have come from areas occupied by the Germans. They tell of looting, and savagery against Soviet citizens. This tale is typical: "honestly speaking, until the Germans arrived in our district, no one believed the Germans would plunder, rape and kill as they did, and now I have sad experience on my own skin and, to revenge myself time and time again, I'm ready to undertake any mission." ... In the queues they recount news from letters received from the front. They relate with great love and warmth to the Red Army warriors. Some housewives recall the names of generals commanding this or that part of the front without any mistake. They know General Rokossovskii better than any other: "Now that's the man to show them what for". Discontent at the food shops is directed against the incompetence of the shops' management.'

The reports also contain references to the worsening food supply situation, which for a time reduced Muscovites to despair: 'technical director Strykul' entered the factory workshop and said to the foreman Petrov, "if I don't come into work on Monday, you can count on my not being alive. I can't live like this any more. I'll stab my wife and shoot myself. By spring I won't be alone in this, many will be found. I'm not the only one to be starving, there are hundred of thousands. This is what the war and our wise policy have achieved." The onset of famine obviously again revived anti-Soviet murmurings which had been suppressed for a while. Volkova, a factory worker, said, "the war will end and it'll be bad all the same. They'll again make us pull the burning chestnuts out of the fire for them." A second

worker, Katia, asked, "and who will be stoking up the fire?" "It's obvious who, the party and Stalin. They say that Romanov was bad, but they didn't live as badly then as we do now. Was the war started for us? No, for his sake. He's frightened that it's all up with him, but it's all the same to us. The Germans are not marching against us, but against Bolshevism. If there were fewer of them, curse them, then there would be no war. They shout about the war, but gave all the bread over to the Germans. And now they're sitting around and sucking their thumbs." Doubts are voiced about how long military successes will last, and also about the sense of carrying on the war. A Red army man said in conversation, "How fed up I am with fighting! I'm a rifleman, and I always have a bullet ready for myself. It's bad to be taken prisoner by the Germans, and if you run away from the front, then they'll shut you up in Stalin's camps and you'll be a despised person. To be in Stalin's camps is as bad as being in German ones. So a bullet in the head is better. Sometimes you think, what are we fighting for, what are millions of young lives being sacrificed for? You think and don't know. I'm a party member. ... I feel that the whole weight of this cursed war is falling on the shoulders of the working class alone. Do you think that in the army they're doing nothing, and that in Moscow they're only talking of how to eat their fill?" These conversations took place in Moscow on 14 and 24 December 1941.<sup>89</sup>

A report of 30 December 1941, from M.I. Zhuravlev to L.P. Beria, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, on the population's reaction to the rout of Hitler's forces outside Moscow, confirmed on the one hand that 'the successful actions of the Red Army have further strengthened the confidence of the population of Moscow, and the Moscow province in the inevitable defeat of the Fascist hordes', and on the other hand referred to a whole series of pronouncements with the leitmotif, 'it's still too early to rejoice in our successes'.<sup>90</sup>

In the following months, as noted above, the food supply situation became close to catastrophic. In this connection, an increasingly anti-peasant mood was observed among the hungry citizens that winter. December's mood of calm perplexity was by spring changing to an egalitarian-communist 'food requisitioning' pathos. Verzhbitskii recorded on 4 December: 'Someone selling a packet of rough tobacco [*makhorka*] at a speculative price gets five years in prison, ... but



collective farmers who sell salted cucumbers for 20 roubles a kilo get nothing.' On 14 December he wrote: 'At the market a lieutenant quite rightly curses a collective farm woman for skinning people alive in demanding 10 roubles a kilo for potatoes'.<sup>91</sup> On 26 March he noted: 'the conductor shouted out at the market: "just let these greedy skinflints (she had in mind the collective farmers) finish the sowing, and then the government will "level" them" [with the town]!'<sup>92</sup>

The food supply question definitely took first place (by a long way) in March and April 1941 among the 'negative communications' detected by the military censorship; in second place came lack of lighting, water and fuel; in third place, the exchange of manufactured goods for food products; in fourth place, accommodation; in fifth place, a variety of issues. Perhaps 'anti-Soviet sentiments' were subsumed under the last category? Or did people in general avoid such a 'delicate matter' in their correspondence? In March, the censorship operated by the second special section of the NKVD of the USSR scrutinised 8,489,275 letters from the civilian population of Moscow; 142,382 or 1.87 per cent of these, contained negative comments; 14,119 letters were confiscated. In April, the military censorship of Moscow scrutinised 10,314,940 letters, and detected 111,871, or 1.08 per cent, with negative comments; 11,475 were confiscated. This means that the number of 'negative communications' in April decreased by 41.5 per cent compared with March. This was probably linked with the improvements in food supplies at that time.

In general, the impression is given that by April–May 1942 the life of Moscow had stabilised and entered a more or less normal path as a result of the successes at the front, the decrease in enemy air attacks and the overcoming of the food and fuel crises. The Staff Bulletin of the Security Police of 8 May 1942 stated: 'In its external appearance, life in Moscow does not differ greatly from what it was before the war.' It is true that this source identifies one difference: 'in recent months, the Soviet government has more and more restricted measures hostile to the church. Recently, there was even an announcement about the freedom of the Church. All the churches which had been saved from destruction were opened, and many people attend them. There are regular church services in which prayers are uttered for the freedom of the Russian land.' A Soviet source also noted large church attendances. According to information from Zhuravlev, the NKVD chief of Moscow

city and province, in April 1942, 'all the working churches of Moscow and the Moscow province held services on the night of 4–5 April, and also on the morning of 5 April 1942 for the religious holiday of Easter. The bulk of believers attending the services were women aged 40 or over. ... A total of up to 75,000 people attended the 30 working churches of the city of Moscow.'<sup>95</sup>

The general stabilisation, including the stabilisation of church–state relations, also found expression in the state of mind of Muscovites. According to reports of groups on special duties, they considered their situation to be fully satisfactory, and were ready to accept future deprivations in order to achieve victory over the enemy. Anti-Soviet manifestations had declined to almost nil. The bulletin for 24 April reported on the mood in the queues at some shops: 'The basic themes of conversations in the queues were: (i) conversations about food supplies to the population show that people in general understand the situation and consider that the supplies are fully satisfactory under present conditions ... the absolute majority of the population is ready to suffer any deprivation, if only the Germans can be destroyed and driven out; but (ii) there are some instances of expressions of dissatisfaction connected with the lack of this or that particular product ... Political questions loom much larger in the conversations. There is a lot of talk about the barbarity of the Germans. Most are indignant, but there are individuals who express doubts and there is even direct fascist agitation. Muscovites also stated their readiness to sacrifice their own children, and themselves, in order to defeat the enemy.'<sup>96</sup> The report for 19 May stated: 'A worker (a war invalid) who had recently arrived at a factory (Neftegaz) said, "We've survived a terrible winter, we've gained in strength. I've seen all the barbarities with my own eyes. And Comrade Stalin was right to say that the combatants have become more evil. The enthusiasm of the lads at the front has become greater." In addition, two cases of anti-collective farm comments were recorded among the workers'.<sup>97</sup>

### *Conclusions*

Thus, the dynamics of the mood of Muscovites between June 1941 and May 1942 were expressed as follows. In the first two or three days, expressions of patriotic altruism dominated, at least externally (and

were expressed in the successful mobilisation, the large numbers of volunteers, the views put forward at meetings). Their relative proportion then probably declined, with a growth in individualistic feelings: a section of the recruits tried to evade service; efforts by the population to save itself from material shortages were widespread (the buying up of foodstuffs, the withdrawal of savings bank deposits). There was also mass stupefaction at the catastrophic start to the war. Cases of defeatism, of expectation of anti-Soviet disturbances and anti-communist comments were observed. From July through September, the Muscovites' mood polarised and its spectrum narrowed, with the citizens' attention concentrated almost exclusively on problems related to the war. Society split, as it were, into three sections: the patriots who had decided to resist to the death; 'the swamp', who became a fertile breeding-ground for a variety of rumours of a 'war' character; and 'the defeatists', who hoped for the overthrow of Bolshevism at the hands of the Germans (the political enemies of the regime did not consolidate, and linked the realisation of their hopes with the victory of the Wehrmacht).

The evacuation of Moscow in mid-October demonstrated the mass character of the altruistic and patriotic mood among ordinary Muscovites, which contrasted with the egotistic and panic-stricken mood among the lower and middle-ranking party and state leadership. These tragic events also demonstrated the comparatively insignificant incidence among Muscovites of defeatist and anti-Communist sentiments.

In November and the first half of December, there were almost no such sentiments. The appearance of negative emotions among Muscovites shifted from the military-strategic and socio-political sphere to social and everyday concerns (exasperation at the worsening food supply situation).

From the second half of December through March, sharp dissatisfaction with the almost catastrophic social and living conditions dominated among manifestations of a 'negative mood'. Lack of confidence in victory increased, and anti-Soviet political expressions again began to be encountered (although more rarely than at the outset of the war).

In April and May, the mood of the masses was normalised: the population regarded the food supply situation as tolerable; readiness to

make sacrifices for the sake of victory was expressed; the quantity of 'negative comments' of all kind declined.

### **General Conclusions**

Factors of a non-material character had more influence than factors of a material nature on the mood of Muscovites. Thus, depression, defeatism and anti-state (anti-Soviet) sentiments were more widespread among the people in the first days and months of the war than at any other time. This was at a time when, on the one hand, food and fuel supplies, the repressive policies of the authorities and the death rate were at practically the pre-war level or had changed only insignificantly, whereas, on the other hand, information on the situation at the front was vague or sharply negative. In mid-October, the exclusively negative information – or, more truthfully, the lack of information – caused alarm in people's minds. By contrast, in November and the first half of December, Muscovites' morale had improved, with a high degree of optimism, patriotism and self-sacrifice. This was a time when, on the one hand, food and fuel supplies had significantly deteriorated and the repressive policies had become more savage after the introduction of a state of siege on 20 October, and, on the other hand, there was a flow of favourable information (the parade, the leaders' speeches, the military victories). During January–March 1942, information about the situation at the front was in general positive, although not so inspiring as in November and early December. In turn, living conditions declined catastrophically. In this situation, defeatist and anti-state sentiments grew, but not significantly. In April and May, against the same informational background, the death rate doubled compared with the pre-war period and reached the highest level of the whole war, the food supply situation improved, and the mood of Muscovites was characterised by resolution, firmness, and readiness to make sacrifices for the sake of victory. True, significant information, in itself a non-material factor, concerned fully 'tangible' and vitally important things: the personal, family and social fate of citizens in the event of victory or defeat. Unofficial information enjoyed greater popular confidence. All in all, information on the behaviour of the occupiers commanded the greatest interest. Forced to choose between,

on the one hand, real material deprivation, including at times a direct threat of death from famine, and a Bolshevik dictatorship and, on the other hand, the threat of a degraded national existence under a Hitlerite dictatorship, the mass of Muscovites chose the former option.

## Notes

1. L. Kolodnyi, *Khozhdienie v Moskvu* (Moscow, 1990); *Moskva voennaia. Sbornik vospominanii* (Moscow, 1995); not to be confused with the book of the same title published by Mosgorarkhiv, and others.
2. R.G. Grigor'ev, '*Moskva voennaia. 1941 god...* (Novye istochniki iz sekretnykh arkhivnykh fondov)', *Istoriia SSSR*, 1991, No. 6.
3. 'Ne tol'ko panika (Oktiabr' 1941g. v Moskvie)', *Neizvestnaia Rossiia XX vek*, Book III (Moscow, 1993).
4. *Moskva voennaia, 1941–1945. Memuary i arkhivnye dokumenty* (Moscow, 1995). This volume contains 263 documents, including some previously classified as 'completely secret', from 12 archives, and 319 illustrations, for the most part previously unpublished. The bulk of its contents comprise memories and diaries of participants in the events; directives, orders and communiqués of the NKVD and party organs, and reports by French and German agents on the situation in the Soviet capital.
5. Previously the Central State Archive of the October Revolution and Socialist Construction of the city of Moscow.
6. O.K. Matveev, 'Chislennost' naseleniia Moskvyy v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny (po materialam TsGAORSS g. Moskvyy)', *Otechestvennaia istoria*, 1992, No. 3, p. 155. According to a report by A.N. Kosygin, deputy chairman of the Council for Evacuation under the Council of the National Economy of the USSR, which was entitled 'On the course of evacuation from the city of Moscow and the Moscow region of Union and Union-republics' enterprises as of 25 November 1941',

a total of 498 union and union-republic enterprises are being evacuated from Moscow and the Moscow region. This figure excludes republican enterprises, industrial co-operatives, higher educational establishments, scientific research and planning institutes, libraries, museums, theatres and other institutions. In all, 250,000 enterprise workers, research and administrative staff were evacuated ... To complete the evacuation, it is necessary to remove 498 enterprises and 135,000 persons.

– *Moskva voennaia*, p. 370.

7. Matveev, 'Chislennost' naselenii Moskvyy', p. 155.
8. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 362, 607.
9. Ibid. p. 364.
10. Report of the Municipal Department of Education, 'Itogi raboty za 6 mesiatsev voiny', *Moskva voennaia*, p. 607.
11. From the first days of the war, 'Check-points were set up on all main roads on the

approaches to Moscow. ... Evacuation points were organised from 29.vi ... for the reception and transfer onwards to their appointed destination of all persons seized at the check-points. To prevent the possibility of persons [evacuated from the Western regions by passenger train] settling in Moscow, distribution points were organised at the offices of the railway police of the stations of Moscow to despatch those who were arriving to their appointed destination.' Reception points were organised on a round-the-clock basis for the despatch to their appointed destination of persons arriving from the war zones and delayed in Moscow ... from 25 to 29 July (inclusive) 3,409 persons were brought to the reception points in Moscow, of whom 528 were left undespached in the reception points on 30.vi.'; 'Spravka zam. nachal'nika UNKVD g. Moskvy i Moskovskoi oblasti inspektora militsii V.N. Romanchenko v SNK SSSR ob evakuatsii v tyl lits, pribyvshikh stolitsu iz raiona boevykh deistvii ot 30 iunia 1941 g.', *Moskva voennaia*, p. 359.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 548, 552–3.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
14. *Moskovskaia gorodskaiia organizatsiia KPSS. 1917–1988. Tsifry. Dokumenty, Materialy* (Moscow, 1989) p. 19.
15. The card entitled its holder to buy at low prices (in grams – per day for bread, per month for other products): bread – 800 for workers, 600 for clerical workers, 400 for dependants, 400 for children up to 12, meal groats and macaroni – 2,000, 1,500, 1,000 and 1,200 respectively; sugar and confectionary – 1,500, 1,200, 1000 and 1200 respectively; meat and meat products – 2200, 1,200, 600 and 600 respectively; fish and fish products – 1,000, 800, 500 and 500 respectively; fats – 800, 400, 200 and 400 respectively. See *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 507–11, 729.
16. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 506–7
17. Archive of the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Nauchnyi arkhiv Instituta rossiiskoi istorii RAN), f. 2, razdel 8, op. 6, d. 2, l. 3.
18. Verzhbitskii had left for the front in July as a volunteer; however, he was demobilised into the reserves in autumn as a result of his extreme short sightedness; from 16 October, he spent all the war years in Moscow, keeping his diary.
19. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 477, 480, 481, 486, 487, 491, 492.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 520–21, 523–4.
21. *Moskva voennaia, Sbornik vospominanii*, p. 13.
22. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 496, 498.
23. In accord with the 'Instruction on the procedures for the sale of goods by coupons' of the trade section of *Mosgorispolkom* of 16 July, 'Cafeterias serving enterprises, institutions and educational establishments provide meat dinners on condition of delivery by the purchaser of a ration coupon for meat on the following ratio ... for a dinner prepared from 100 grams of meat, a coupon for 50 grams of meat; for a dinner prepared from 200 grams of meat, a coupon for 100 grams of meat ... Bread is provided for diners at the cafeteria on delivery of the corresponding quantity of bread coupons, but no higher than the daily norms established for that category.' See *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 510, 525.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 499, 500, 501, 502.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 527.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 504.

27. Ibid., pp. 533–4.
28. Ibid., pp. 625–5, 672, 677.
29. The above data were taken from the book '*Moskve – vozduشناia trevoga*'. *Mestnaia PVO v gody voiny* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 4–5, 397–401.
30. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 427–9
31. Report on the work of the Moscow metro under war conditions, by the head of the MVPO service A.Solov'ev, for the commission on the history of the Great Fatherland War, 24 July 1944, *Moskva voennaia*, p. 460.
32. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 36–9, 43–4.
33. Ibid., p.478.
34. Ibid., p. 125.
35. Ibid., pp. 545–8.
36. TsAODM g. Moskvyy, f. 3, op. 52, d. 138, ll. 21–3, 26–7.
37. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 550–2.
38. K.M. Simonov, *Raznye dni voiny. Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, Vol. 1 (Moscow, 1977) p. 65.
39. *Moskva voennaia*, p. 475.
40. *Istoriia SSSR*, 1991, No.6, pp. 112, 118, 122.
41. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 41,60,130,142.
42. Ibid., p. 494.
43. Ibid., p. 211.
44. Ibid., pp.381–2.
45. Ibid., p.69.
46. *Istoriia SSSR*, 1991, no. 6, p. 112.
47. *Moskva voennaia*, p. 671.
48. *Istoriia SSSR*, 1991, No. 6, p. 116.
49. *Moskva voennaia*, p. 499.
50. Ibid., p.219.
51. Ibid., pp. 587–8.
52. Ibid., p.382.
53. See, for example, *Istoriia SSSR*, 1991, No. 6, pp. 111, 113, 115, 116, 120.
54. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 657–87.
55. Matveev, 'Chislennost naseleniia', pp. 158–60.
56. *Moskva voennaia*, p. 46.
57. Ibid., p. 42.
58. Ibid., p. 53.
59. Ibid., p. 55.
60. Ibid., p. 55; *Istoriia SSSR*, 1991, No. 6, pp. 107–9.
61. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 49–50.
62. Ibid., p. 43.
63. Ibid., p. 52.
64. Ibid., p. 382.
65. Ibid., p.67–9.
66. Simonov, *Raznye dni voiny*, p. 66.
67. *Istoriia SSSR*, 1991, No. 6, pp. 113, 116–19.
68. Archive of the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, f. 2, razdel 8, op. 6, d. 2, l. 3.

69. *Moskva voennaia*, p. 384.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
71. For more details, see Kolodnyi, *Khozhdanii v Moskvu*, pp. 130–62; *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 106–23, 249–50, 475–83, 563.
72. Report of the Administration of the Commandant of Moscow on the implementation by the military command of the GKO's decree 'On the introduction of a state of siege in Moscow' of 9 August 1942, *Moskva voennaia*, p. 550.
73. *Moskva voennaia*, p. 121.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 250.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12.
76. *Ibid.*, pp. 475–8.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–19.
78. Kolodnyi, *Khozhdenie v Moskvu*, p. 141.
79. *Moskva voennaia*, pp. 109, 111.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
82. See *ibid.*, pp. 129–58.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 152.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 616.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 158–60.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 165–9.
88. *Ibid.*, pp. 184–5.
89. *Ibid.*, pp. 200–205.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 206–8.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 493, 495.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 502.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 218–19.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 222.



# 13 The Theory and Practice of World Revolution in the Perception of Inter-war Europe

An Attempt at a Historical Generalisation

Aleksandr Vatlin

Scholars of the communist movement, from whatever ideological and theoretical standpoint, have concentrated primarily on its internal sources and documentary heritage. When analysing this or that past event, all historians strive to empathise with its material and spiritual legacy and consequently at some stage identify themselves with the subject of their research in order to draw conclusions and evaluations. This approach has dominated historiography, but that does not mean it is adequate. One could argue that the reconstruction of the activities and historical traces (*sleda*) of any personality, party, spiritual movement or economic structure is also possible by examining how they were perceived by contemporaries, by comparing 'internal history' with the external locus on which this history is born, develops and dies.

This methodology is very rare among works dedicated to the history of the Communist International (Comintern). Evidently, what was important here was both the specific nature of the object of study, which denied the values of the 'old world', and the political predilections of the historians of the Comintern, who until recently found

themselves at the forefront of the ideological struggle (to borrow Soviet terminology). We shall try to re-create the dynamics not of the Comintern's activities, which in recent years have been dealt with in great detail by both Russian and foreign scholars, but of the European perception of these activities in the 1920s and 1930s. Such a view from without should help to integrate the Comintern's legacy into the mainstream of twentieth-century ideological and political history and reveal the imprint that the theory and practice of international proletarian revolution has left on the contemporary world.

Let us immediately turn our attention to the principal difficulty of this approach: the necessity of generalising and reducing to a common denominator the poles of opinion on one and the same subject. A glance at the documents of the Anti-Comintern League and the contrary estimations of the worker delegations that visited the Soviet Union will suffice. But it seems possible, nevertheless, to construct a dynamic model of the external perceptions of the Comintern if we take as our benchmark the opinions of the political elites and the mass media, which in inter-war Europe were losing their bourgeois, class character just as the Comintern was losing its proletarian base.

We shall begin by outlining three periods of non-communist perceptions of the Comintern. Between 1919 and 1923 the Communist International appears in European public opinion as a radical ideological and military-political movement with an undeniable international base. It represents a real threat to the existing order. Between 1923 and 1933 the Comintern is perceived as a closed and politically undynamic organisation which concentrates on propagating the notion of 'world Bolshevism' and as such loses its international integrational character. Hence, it is no longer 'enemy number one' for the ruling circles of Europe. Between 1933 and 1943, the final stage, views on the Comintern and communist parties become stratified. These views come to the fore in the political battles and public opinion of a Europe on the eve of the Second World War. Whether positive or negative, communist parties are perceived as 'of themselves' (*svoe*), internalised, while the Comintern is considered an external factor, primarily as one of the instruments of Soviet foreign policy. The key element is the Comintern apparatus, which functioned according to routine bureaucratic laws and whose work combined both radical propaganda and opportunist policies, depending on the goals of the moment. This apparatus is now

unthinkable without the Bolshevik state and represents no danger to European democratic principles. At the same time, it is incapable of siding with the latter in the growing opposition to Nazism.

The chronological limits of these periods are strictly relative. Even before the years 1923 and 1933 new tendencies are fully maturing. In addition, the proposed periodisation may appear to suffer from 'Germanocentrism'. However, such events as the failed 'German October' of 1923 or the Nazi 'brown' revolution ten years later play a far from leading role when analysing the perceptions of the theory and practice of the Comintern 'from without'.

The decisive moment separating the first and second periods, not only from this external perspective but also in the history of the Comintern in general, was Lenin's departure from politics, and soon from life itself, as he was undeniably the only charismatic force of 'world Bolshevism'. As distinct from Marx and Engels, who remained the theoreticians and at best the patrons of the first two socialist Internationals, Lenin was the creator and motor, the soul and symbol of the Comintern. For its enemies and friends alike, his name was inseparable from the world revolution in its radical communist interpretation. One need only skim through the stenograms of the Fourth (1922) and Fifth (1924) Comintern congresses to sense the gulf that lies between them.

It was not the stabilisation of capitalism that caused the disorientation of the communists. It was rather the inability of the Comintern leadership to break the Leninist mould in evaluating the changing world situation. Only Trotsky, perhaps, had charismatic potential, but the vicissitudes of the internal struggles in the Russian Communist Party (RCP) shunted him aside. The loss of personal charisma at one of the turning-points in Comintern history exacerbated the isolation of the communist movement, while those who secretly sympathised with the Bolshevik experiment in Russia were left indifferent.

In Russia itself, a process of internal political retreat and foreign policy normalisation was under way. The appearance of Soviet envoys in Western Europe no longer caused a stir and the signing of the Rapallo Treaty had shown that diplomatic canons remained in force even between states with differing social systems. Bolshevik Russia gradually lost its exotic status and became a normal country. Thus, it went out of fashion among radical intelligentsia circles abroad. The

failure to achieve a 'new world' in one leap alienated vacillating supporters and led to a stagnation in the numbers of European communists. The Comintern ceased to be one of the central themes in newspaper columns and political discussions, since it was obvious that it played virtually no role in the life of Soviet Russia.

The practice of building socialism in one country clearly outstripped the theory, which had been adopted by Stalin and Bukharin above all to strengthen their own positions in the Bolshevik party. By unconditionally upholding this theory, the Comintern condemned itself to a subordinate role *vis-à-vis* the Kremlin. From an organisation of revolutionary action it began to turn into a propaganda centre. One cannot deny the success of Willi Münzenberg's propaganda 'empire', especially at the end of the 1920s, but its principal levers, the press and cinema, concentrated on producing a positive image of the Soviet Union much more than propagating the idea of world proletarian revolution.

The Comintern's activities also played a not inconsiderable part in eroding, quite rapidly, its romantic heroic image. The attempted communist coups in Bulgaria, Germany and Estonia in 1923–24 with the best will in the world could only be seen abroad as defeats for the revolution – essentially, they were non-events. The Comintern leaders, impervious to the lack of combustible material, sifted through their organisation in search of the 'little nuts and bolts' who were deemed guilty of extinguishing the spark of world conflagration. Leaving aside the victory of Bolshevism in Russia, Europe overcame the post-war crisis without the aid of the communists, although some concessions to communist – or let us say socialist – doctrine were made. Nor were the hopes of an explosion of national liberation struggles in the colonial world realised.

In conditions of stabilisation, radicalism went out of fashion, yielding pride of place in public opinion to enlightened self-interest and hedonism. 'Get rich and live for today' – such slogans from Europe, above all from the Russian diaspora, not only affected the NEPmen, but even seized part of the Bolshevik *nomenklatura* (suffice it to recall Bukharin's famous appeal to the peasantry to get rich). The wind of new ideas, which at one time blew from the East, reverted to its prevailing direction. Communist ideology, having become state doctrine in Russia, was isolated in Europe and thus found no social underpinning

(*podpitki*). As a result, our second period (1923–33) represented a transition from the perception of Bolshevik Russia through the prism of world revolution to the perception of the Comintern through the prism of Soviet state interests.

This second period ends with the recovery of the world economy from its three-year-long global crisis. Comintern political economists were unable to convince the European public of the need for radical socialist prescriptions to restructure the world economy, because the necessary minimum of internal freedom of discussion in the Comintern had been treated unceremoniously after the consolidation of Stalin's rule in the RCP. Capitalism and the market economy had proved their ability to regulate themselves and develop, and for Western citizens this was a weightier argument than Comintern propaganda statistics on the scale of socialist construction in the USSR.

The Nazi accession to power dealt a still more crushing blow to communist ideology. As a legal takeover, it demonstrated that radical anti-democratic forces could rely not only on their own peculiar methods of struggle, such as *putsches* or coups. Comintern doctrine, at the centre of which remained the revolutionary seizure of power by the proletariat, again revealed its inadequacy. The adoption, contrary to Moscow's directives, of the theory and practice of the 'Popular Anti-Fascist Front' did not pass unnoticed by European public opinion any more than the fact that the Comintern's 'second wind' was used by Moscow to secure its foreign policy interests.

Communist participation in the 'Popular Front' in a number of European countries prolonged the existence of the Comintern for a few more years, although in Western public opinion it was practically forgotten. It is interesting that a similar outcome occurred in the USSR. The consolidation and brutalisation of the regime turned the notion of proletarian solidarity into an empty phrase. Communists and political émigrés in the Soviet Union lost the freedom to change their place of residence and experienced the negative effects of the Great Power spirit and xenophobia which took root in the Stalinist regime. A few years later and a wave of repressions would engulf them. In the perception of Western ruling circles the Comintern had long ago turned into a preparatory centre for a pro-Soviet 'fifth column', whereas it was now viewed by the NKVD as a haven for a pro-imperialist 'fifth column'.

Comintern functionaries spared no pains to convince Stalin of their

loyalty and usefulness, but the ambiguous position of their organisation was obvious, even to themselves. Georgi Dimitrov raised the question of the dissolution of the Comintern several times, but only Stalin's foreign policy manoeuvres permitted a positive resolution to this problem.

In conclusion, we can delineate two lines of evaluation arising from our study of the perception of the Comintern in non-communist Europe. The first saw the International in terms of both the internal (the ability to seize power) and external (propagandistic attractions) effectiveness of this organisation. If the internal effectiveness of the Comintern was preserved only during the initial phase of its activities, when it constantly attracted the attention of foreign ruling circles, then the external came to naught gradually and was to a greater extent linked to an interest in the Bolshevik experiment, an interest which had already faded in foreign society by the beginning of the 1930s.

Our second line evaluated the relevance of Comintern ideology and practice in inter-war Europe. At one pole stood the traditions of the workers' Internationals and socialist thought, which were reflected in the original conception of the Comintern. The radicalism of the latter's ideological postulates was regarded as an acceptable, pan-European phenomenon until such time as the real historical situation left open the question of alternative roads out of the crisis at the end of the First World War. When the appeals for world proletarian revolution turned into ritual incantations, unamenable to rational critique, so the Comintern as a political movement departed from European traditions.

This was not the result of any decision or directive. It was simply that the activity of the Comintern was perceived as inappropriate, externally directed and unable to address the interests of social development. The ideology of the communist movement fell between two magnetic poles – the spiritual bond with the European socialist labour movement and the organisational bond with the victorious Russian Bolsheviks. The latter was more material and hence more durable. Paradoxically, all the attempts of the Comintern leaders to rid themselves of verbal radicalism, to adapt to the new realities of European politics failed to halt the process of their alienation from these realities. The dynamics of the perception of the Comintern prove that it became all the more alien and uninteresting for Europeans.

# 14 The Abortive 'German October', 1923

## New Light on the Revolutionary Plans of the Russian Communist Party, the Comintern and the German Communist Party

Bernhard H. Bayerlein

The abortive 'German October' of 1923 has begun to provoke new interest in historical writing.<sup>1</sup> Russian and German political involvement in the uprising has hitherto been in the 'twilight' (K.D. Bracher), but recently accessible archival evidence has expanded existing knowledge and informed new approaches.<sup>2</sup> The present short and somewhat impressionistic overview is based on a joint project with three Russian historians, Leonid Babichenko, Fridrikh Firsov and Aleksandr Vatlin, the result of which will be an edition of some of the fundamental Russian materials on the uprising, to be published concurrently by the Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History (RTsKhIDNI, Moscow) and the European Workshop of International Historical Research on the Comintern, Communism and Stalinism (Cologne).<sup>3</sup> In this chapter I will limit myself to some remarks of a more general, and at times hypothetical, character. Needless to say, I alone am responsible for the opinions expressed here. Everyone is free to give their own interpretation of the documents.

Although many historians have tended to treat the 'German October' as merely an episode, there was undoubtedly a unique revolutionary crisis in 1923 in a highly developed capitalist country.<sup>4</sup> This is why almost all observers speak of a decisive year in the social situation of

the German people, and also in the general crisis of the Weimar state. But most historians of the Weimar Republic, such as Kolb, Bracher and Schwabe – Rosenberg is one of the few exceptions – regard the ‘German October’ as a failed totalitarian attempt paralleling the Hitler-Ludendorff *putsch*.<sup>5</sup> In my opinion, this conclusion is incorrect as there was no open confrontation between the opposing camps. The German revolution of 1923 was never proclaimed; it was to be declared in the wake of a general strike following the formal decision of a social-democrat-dominated workers’ council conference in Saxony. What the new documents tell us is that the common interpretation of October 1923 as an extremist *putsch* can no longer be maintained. Drawing a comparison between the Comintern-inspired ‘March Action’ (*März-aktion*) of the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1921 – which did indeed display *putschist* characteristics – and the events of October 1923 seems to be sophistry.<sup>6</sup> We shall have great difficulties explaining those events if we fail to take into account the open social space and the revolutionary nature of the situation.

The history of the uprising has a much greater dimension than that of a failed coup. It affects topics such as the ‘European Revolution’,<sup>7</sup> revolutionary and military strategy, party history and social, political and constitutional history. Hence, it is fascinating to be able to study the preparation, and partial execution, of the one and only plan for a socialist revolution in Germany. But the ‘break’ of 1923 not only has a general historical meaning. It is also of prime importance for the history of the KPD, the Comintern and even the Russian Communist Party (RCP). In the communist movement, 1923 served as the model of the ‘original myth’ (*Ursprungslegende*) of the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the history of German and Russian communism, a creative treatment which signified a manipulation of historical events, especially those of the ‘German October’. In this sense, 1923 represents a turning-point in intellectual history.

The Moscow documents elucidate mainly the decision-making process in the Russian party and in the executive of the Comintern. But they also show clearly the intervention of Russian political leaders and governing bodies. Some of them participated directly in the various delegations sent to Germany; for example, the delegation of the Russian Politburo which served as the highest revolutionary organ. The Soviet secret police, the OGPU, controlled the activities of the Russian



information network, and top Bolshevik officials also played a key role in the military and technical aspects of the uprising.<sup>8</sup>

There was indeed a most remarkable sequence of events going on in this fateful year (*Schicksalsjahr*). It begins with the occupation of the Ruhr, the economic collapse, unemployment and hyper-inflation, the subsequent active and passive resistance of the population, the impressive strike wave in the summer, the dismissal of Reich Chancellor Cuno as a consequence of the general strike warning, separatist movements in the Rhineland leading to the proclamation of the so-called 'Rhine Republics', the great coalition under Stresemann and its ultimate breakdown, the secession of Bavaria, the self-exclusion of parliament, the authoritarian rule of General von Seeckt brought into power by the Social Democratic head of state, Friedrich Ebert, and not least the military intervention (*Reichsexekution*) against the legal government of Saxony and Hitler's failed fascist *putsch* in Munich. Thus, there was good reason to believe that the time had come for socialist revolution in Germany as the expected continuation and Europeanisation of the Russian revolution. To say this, one does not necessarily have to be, as Timothy Garton Ash has stated, an adept of the German immanent school, nor an adherent of totalitarian political models. The Bolsheviks and the German communists placed no faith in liberal representative democracy, but this attitude does not *per se* represent a totalitarian or authoritarian point of view. They shared this vision with most of the European cultural and intellectual avant-garde after the First World War.

However, the one and only planned socialist revolution was cancelled even before it began. The Saxon workers' conference at Chemnitz on 21 October refused to vote for a general strike and this meant the postponement of the uprising. Until then, the Russian side – despite the existence of contending factions – had been rather unified in its aim of fulfilling Lenin's pledge to open Comintern headquarters in Berlin. As Angress has suggested, the decision of the Russian Politburo in August 1923 to prepare the uprising had perhaps come too late given the factional disputes in the party. But there were, at the same time, more meaningful discussions on fundamental questions in the RCP than in the KPD.

It is true that debates in the German party were extremely important for developments in the Bolshevik party, and obviously the opposite is

true. But until recently firm documentary evidence has been largely absent. We can now be sure that the decision to organise the revolution in Germany was a Russian one, although a powerful motivational push (*Motivationsschub*) from both sides is evident. Even other communist parties had their say, and communists were waiting for a qualitative change not only in the situation in Germany and Europe, but in the Comintern itself. It must also be noted that in principle the KPD chose for itself the policies proposed by the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) and the RCP. Russian and German revolutionary procedures, as Dietrich Geyer has pointed out, are very often interlinked.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, the defeat of the 'German October' signified a major break in the history of this relationship. The *de facto* separation of the two communist movements was precisely one of the principal outcomes of the abortive revolution. It meant the artificial exclusion of the most important communist party in the West from the Russian party and its struggles.

The materials to be published show above all the strategic, political and theoretical aspects of the preparation in Russia, Germany and the Comintern, and only in a minor degree the military and technical aspects. Regarding personal inputs and responsibilities, the most striking fact is arguably the overwhelming role of Zinoviev as political leader. Nearly all the fundamental guidelines and documents came from him: he set the orientation. Trotsky contributed some reflections, was militarily responsible for the uprising and stressed the importance of the schedule and organs of the revolution. Politically, though, he intervened in a strong way only after the failed attempt. On the other hand, one must not forget that he insisted against Zinoviev and Stalin that the workers' councils – and not the soviets, which were non-existent in Germany – should be the future power structure once the uprising was successful.

Much precious and sometimes surprising information about the leading actors is to be discovered in the documents. For example, the KPD did not want Zinoviev to come to Germany to prepare the movement. Trotsky and Radek were preferred, but Zinoviev proposed himself. In the Russian Politburo jokes circulated about Zinoviev's need to go to a barber's shop before setting out for Germany. As a compromise, Radek, Piatakov, Shmid and Unshlicht were finally appointed as the leading political personnel. Krestinskii, at that time

Soviet ambassador in Berlin, installed not only the Comintern's mysterious Department of International Communication (*Otdel mezhdunarodnoi sviazi* – OMS) under Abramov-Mirov in the embassy, but also channelled the not inconsiderable amounts of cash, referred to by Ruth Fischer as the 'Russian aqueduct' (*russische Wasserleitung*). There is, of course, information about the financing of the parties, especially to sustain the middle cadres who had to prepare the revolution.

Most interesting is the fact that during these revolutionary preparations there existed no monolithic bloc in either the RCP, the Comintern or the KPD.<sup>10</sup> The Comintern was still a place for discussion – indeed, a battle about key questions ensued. In these circumstances, it would be far from reality to depict the Russian party as a fully totalitarian, despotic organisation and – *a fortiori* – the German communists, who were perhaps more divided than the Russians. However, signs of factional manipulation became increasingly evident, and by the time of the official balance-sheet and 'great reckoning' in December 1923–January 1924 they were dominant. As is well known, this meant the punishment of the *boucs émissaires* such as Brandler and Thalheimer in the KPD, Radek, Trotsky and Piatakov in the RCP, and – lest we forget – the whole of the Left Opposition in the Russian party, formed in autumn 1923.

It is impossible to describe here the different steps in the preparation of the 'German October' taken by the RCP, the Comintern and the KPD, but there is a general impression to be gained from the documents. The revolutionary preparations seemed to evolve in a sort of historical vacuum. Not one of the decisive events in Germany was accompanied by corresponding agitational activity, concrete resistance, mobilisation and the like by the German party. For example, the nomination of von Seeckt, the sending of Reichswehr troops to Saxony, the beginning of the so-called *Reichsexekution* against the federal state 'workers' government' in Saxony and Thuringia, the declaration of the various social and political emergency laws (*Ermächtigungsgesetze*), and finally the Hitler *Putsch* on 9 November met with little response from the KPD. It is noteworthy, however, that the party, probably through its information apparatus, was aware much earlier than other political forces of these coming events.

The tide turned completely after the definitive postponement of the

uprising in November–December 1923. To this extent, the way in which the balance-sheet of the events was shaped was at least as important for the communist movement as the cancellation of the revolution itself. Carr and Broué are basically right to argue that it was the Reichswehr which dictated the timing of the events and put the KPD and Comintern up against the wall.<sup>11</sup> Angress goes even further – perhaps a little too far – in his analysis. For him, the events cast doubt on the entire concept of the revolutionary uprising. Apparently, the time for preparation had been too short, particularly when one takes into consideration the fact that the original forecast was 9 November (or the weeks thereafter) and that at the last moment everything had to be altered and prepared for 21 October.

As for new evidence regarding the reasons for the defeat, I think that, of the different and often contradictory contemporary explanations, that of Radek was perhaps the closest to reality. Even today the political theses and reports sent by Radek and Piatakov to Zinoviev, Trotsky and Stalin remain unpublished. The decision to retreat became necessary – as I interpret Radek's central argument – mainly because after the occupation of the Ruhr neither the ECCI nor the KPD had adopted a concrete attitude to the question of the seizure of power. Instead, there was an intense battle between the rival cliques of Ruth Fischer and Heinrich Brandler. In the early history of German communism this phenomenon represented not only a political, but a psychological, even an anthropological, continuum.<sup>12</sup> The personal clique regime was introduced not by the Right, but by the so-called German Left around Fischer. This was a result of the death of such dominant figures as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht and the expulsion of Paul Levi, as well as the permanent influence and intervention of the Comintern.

In addition to these personal rivalries, the KPD made several mistakes. The factory council movement was not given the necessary support, the junction between military and political preparation was generally misunderstood, and the July demonstrations in support of the workers' movement were cancelled by the ECCI, largely on the advice of Radek, Stalin and Kuusinen (though it appears no other leaders were present to influence such a decision). The massive strike waves in August were underestimated. In fact, they represented the high point in terms of strikes and radicalisation of the social protest movements. The

KPD concentrated its efforts on its own membership, instead of the different workers' movements. At the very last moment, after the expedition of the Reichswehr to central Germany, the general strike was proclaimed without, as Rosa Luxemburg noted in 1918, 'opening the umbrella'. The enemy was attacked head-on without adequate preparation.

Furthermore, the KPD and ECCI seem to have been fixated on the Saxon experience. Here, the question of participation in the social democratic Zeigner government was endlessly *discussed* instead of organising a *national movement* for the defence of the Saxon workers. The general situation in the Reich was insufficiently taken into account. The Hamburg uprising, which broke out on the evening of 22 October, should certainly be considered an involuntary episode. But, as new evidence shows, the Hamburg communists possessed fewer weapons than hitherto believed and in these circumstances the attack and retreat of the resisters can only be treated with respect, as did Shklovskii, the General Consul of the Soviet Union in Hamburg, in his letters to the Russian Politburo.<sup>13</sup>

The long-discussed question of the responsibility for the catastrophe seems to me to be finally resolved. The Left can certainly claim a considerable part of this responsibility. After the postponement of the uprising, the KPD appeared to enter into a state of paralysis provoked in the first place by the German Left and the politics of the 'Berlin Opposition' under Ruth Fischer. As for the military preparations and operations, until now it has been presumed that a master-plan for the uprising existed. However, as Radek stated in Moscow before his judges Zinoviev and Stalin in January 1924 when he was blamed for the defeat, there was no contingency plan once the original route through the Saxon government and the Chemnitz Conference proved unworkable. Radek's critique at this level is important and also strange, because it implied criticism of the Russian-dominated military apparatus installed in Germany for the revolution. There is indeed a contradiction between the significance attached to the military, technical and informational apparatus built up by the Russians and the Comintern and the meagre results it achieved.

On the other hand, one of the major causes of the defeat was undoubtedly the problematic relationship between the KPD and the Social Democratic Party (SPD), especially its left wing at the national

level, not so much on the Saxon level. In this respect, the abortive German revolution was the birthplace of the Comintern's exaggerated hostility towards the left wing of social democracy. Until recently this key issue has been relatively underexplored, although there exist a number of publications on so-called 'social fascism'.<sup>14</sup> New documents confirm that Stalin, Molotov and Rákosi, in particular, adopted this attitude during the events. Pierre Broué sees here not only a reaction of the bureaucratic strata of the party against their opponents, but also some sort of special hostility to the Left owing to its tendency not to obey its leaders. This could mean that social fascism was induced by the right-wing bureaucratic elements in the Russian party and their immediate 'pupils'. The 'German October' was perhaps the first major confirmation of this sociological phenomenon – a phenomenon which would be used to explain the forthcoming defeats of the international communist movement and become a fundamental tendency of the pre-Stalinist and Stalinist eras.

Why were these absurd exaggerations possible? Because, as intimated by Radek and supported by new documents, neither the KPD nor the ECCI knew what was happening in the ranks of the social democratic left wing; they simply did not know what was happening in the radicalised workers' council movement.<sup>15</sup>

The battle that ensued on the balance-sheet of the 'German October' was at the same time a battle for the Comintern. Trotsky opened it with a letter to the Russian Politburo sharply condemning the political theses and denouncing what he called a manipulation process against German communism. As a consequence of this treatment, a major break in the Communist International became evident in December 1923 and January 1924. Radek, not without reason, declared at the RCP conference in December that the three most influential European parties (the French, German and Polish) had expressed their solidarity with Trotsky and Radek against the party line. The situation was tense; the official delegation of the Russian Politburo in Germany did not even respect an urgent call to return to Moscow.

One of the most revealing pieces of new evidence is the fact that on the eve of 1924 the KPD found itself in fundamental opposition to Moscow's decisions – although this lasted only a few weeks. Nevertheless, we could say that the German party for a short period became a 'Trotskyist' party (the term 'Trotskyist' was coined precisely as a result

of the German events, as well as the anti-bureaucratic struggles of the classical Left opposition in the RCP against the *troika* in autumn 1923). As far as traditional historiography is concerned, in both the East and the West, the designation 'Trotskyist' to describe the KPD is certainly a major heresy, although this hypothesis should not be taken *à la lettre*, but understood in a heuristic sense. At the least, the KPD was on the verge of breaking with the Moscow *troika*, and it was essentially Zinoviev's bureaucratic machinations which neutralised German resistance. Many German communists preferred Radek and Trotsky to Zinoviev and Stalin. This explains why the Russian leaders had to count opportunistically on the Left and the so-called *Mittelgruppe*. The duplicity displayed by Zinoviev and others in 1924–25 with regard to the Left is thus relatively easily accounted for.

Consequently, the year 1923 represented, in the Comintern, the somewhat surprising victory of the *troika* and, in the RCP, the necessity for Trotsky and the Left oppositionists to open battle. Since this battle was lost, it meant the definitive dependence of German communism on the Russian party-state structures. But 1923 was not only a manifestation of the continuing 'Russification' process, albeit from then on subjected to another model. It also signified a decisive step in the abnegation of a specific German communist movement with its own heterogeneous national traditions. Thus, 1923 in general was a key year for the Stalinisation of the Comintern, even if this phenomenon was initially manifest through the influence of Zinovievism. Stalin, for the first time, was engaged in a struggle on a matter of principle in the international communist movement. He did this not as a bloodthirsty tiger, but perhaps because he saw that the Comintern had become a kind of self-betrayed organisation and that foreign communist leaders could be manipulated by the methods of the Russian Politburo majority. This discovery was arguably an important reason for the typical disrespect shown by Stalin and his men for the Comintern, as well as for the multiple political turns they decided on its behalf.

It is difficult to separate the 'German October' from general European history. Germany was no exception to the rule of experimenting with a more authoritarian political regime, as witness Primo de Rivera in Spain and Tsankov in Bulgaria, not to speak of Italian fascism. Russia at that time was not widely regarded as a dangerous red dragon

with totalitarian claws. It was considered a concrete utopia after the breakdown of liberal democracy in the wake of the First World War and was seen, not only by communists, as a way out of the dilemma 'Socialism or Fascism?' Hence, it is impossible to separate the defeat of the German revolution from the catastrophe of 1933. The events of 1923, above all the anti-constitutional, anti-republican and anti-democratic military action against a constitutional federal government justified by a totalitarian communist uprising, were in a certain way repeated ten years later in the 'Prussian strike' (*Preussenschlag*). It was not the revolutionary attempt inspired by the Bolshevik leaders and the German, French and other communist parties that sharpened the character of the 'November Republic'.<sup>16</sup> The political and social breakdown of representative and semi-presidential democracy in 1923 marked the end of the German 'Novembrists' and the final alienation of the workers' movement, which in turn facilitated the success of the Nazis. As the French political scientist Maurice Duverger has suggested, the ultimate characteristics of a political regime depend not so much on the text of the constitution itself, but on the way the political system is maintained and the methods used in this process.

The failed 'German October' pushed the Weimar Republic towards a more authoritarian expression of the semi-presidential system, which was not a parliamentary system *per se*. The early years of the Republic demonstrated that the democratic regime could shift 'constitutionally' to a form of authoritarian rule and to the self-exclusion of almost all parliamentary features. The sole semi-democratic function of the political system – the representative function – was abandoned, and authoritarian rule was left. What Radek called the triumph of 'fascism', the authoritarian interlude of von Seeckt, was not so far from reality; it changed the character of the Weimar Republic.<sup>17</sup> One should not forget that the new totalitarian features of fascism were not so evident in 1923. They were proved by subsequent events. The election of Hindenburg, an enemy of the Republic, to the powerful position of president of this same Republic occurred just two years later. On another level, history has proffered no answer to the question: what would an all-German workers' government have looked like in 1923? Without wishing to enter into science fiction, we can say that it would perhaps have dissolved the base of the fascist movement, the Black Hundreds (*Schwarze Hundertschaften*), together with the Nazi gangs.



Therefore, at the end of this short contribution please permit me a rather malicious remark. Nearly all historians regard the policies of the KPD and Comintern at the beginning of the 1930s, in particular their attitude to the Social Democratic Party, as an important reason for the break-up of the Republic. They are, of course, right. But in 1923 the Stalinist totalitarian system, which facilitated the National Socialist bid for power, was only in its infancy. The failed German revolution was precisely one of its conditions. To this extent, the vision of an alternative destiny for Germany and the world free from fascist barbarity shines through the abortive 'German October'.

## Notes

1. See the following recent publications: W. Zank, 'Aufstand an der Waterkant. "Deutscher Oktober" 1923 an der Alster: ein blutiger Reinfall – Unbekannte Briefe und Berichte zum Putschversuch der Hamburger Kommunisten', *Die Zeit*, 22 October 1993; K. Rudolph, *Die sächsische Sozial-demokratie vom Kaiserreich zur Republik* (Weimar, 1995).
2. The most important works on the 'German October' are W. T. Angress, *Stillborn Revolution: The Communist Bid for Power in Germany, 1921–1923* (Princeton, NJ, 1963); P. Broué, *Revolution en Allemagne, 1917–1923* (Paris, 1971); see also O. Wenzel, *Die Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands im Jahre 1923*, Phil. Diss., Freie Universität Berlin, 1955; E.H. Carr, *The Interregnum, 1923–1924* (London, 1954); H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus. Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, 2 vols (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1969); H.-U. Ludewig, *Arbeiterbewegung und Aufstand. Eine Untersuchung zum Verhalten der Arbeiterparteien in den Aufstandsbewegungen der frühen Weimarer Republik, 1920–1923* (Husum, 1978).
3. See L.G. Babichenko, B.H. Bayerlein, F.I. Firsov and A.Iu. Watlin (eds), *Die deutsche Oktoberrevolution fand nicht statt. Der Revolutionsplan der Komintern und der Russischen Kommunistischen Partei für Deutschland im Jahre 1923* (forthcoming).
4. See the general work by H.A. Winkler, *Von der Revolution zur Stabilisierung: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik, 1918 bis 1924*, Vol. 1 (Bonn, 1984), pp. 605–734.
5. E. Kolb, *Die Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1993); K.D. Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Republik. Eine Studie zum Problem des Machtverfalls in der Demokratie* (Düsseldorf, 1984); K. Schwabe, 'Der Weg der Republik vom Kapp-Putsch 1920 bis zum Scheitern des Kabinetts Müller 1930', in K.D. Bracher, M. Funke and H.-A. Jacobsen (eds), *Die Weimarer Republik, 1918–1933. Politik, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft* (Düsseldorf, 1987), pp. 95–133; A. Rosenberg, *Entstehung und Geschichte der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1988).

6. For the events of 1921, see S. Koch-Baumgarten, *Der Aufstand der Avant-garde. Die Märzaktion der KPD 1921* (Frankfurt-am-Main and New York, 1986).
7. C.B. Tilly, *The European Revolution* (Oxford, 1993).
8. For details of the military-technical preparations and the activities of the information network, see B. Kaufmann, E. Reisener, D. Schwipps and H. Walter, *Der Nachrichtendienst der KPD, 1918–1937* (Berlin, 1993); W.G. Krivitsky, *I Was Stalin's Agent* (Bristol, 1939).
9. D. Geyer, 'Sowjetrussland und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung 1918–1932', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 24 (1976), pp. 1–37.
10. For a contemporary account of the situation in Moscow, see V. Serge, *Le tournant obscur* (Paris, 1951).
11. See Carr, *The Interregnum*; Broué, *Revolution en Allemagne*.
12. On the 'right communists' around Brandler, see H. Weber (ed.), *Heinrich Brandler; Isaac Deutscher: Unabhängige Kommunisten. Der Briefwechsel zwischen Heinrich Brandler und Isaac Deutscher 1949 bis 1967* (Berlin, 1981); on the 'Left' around R. Fischer and A. Maslow, see P. Lübke (ed.), *Ruth Fischer, Arkadij Maslow: Abtrünnig wider Willen. Aus Briefen und Manuskripten des Exils* (Munich, 1990).
13. The literature on the Hamburg Uprising is abundant, but only now can the real importance of the military and logistical forces be revealed: see H. Habdeank, *Zur Geschichte des Hamburger Aufstandes 1923* (East Berlin, 1958); L. Reissner, *Hamburg auf den Barrikaden 1923*, reprint edn (East Berlin, 1960).
14. For the rich literature on social fascism, see S. Bahne, "'Sozialfaschismus' in Deutschland. Zur Geschichte eines politischen Begriffs', *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 10 (1965), pp. 211–45.
15. On the SPD during the Weimar Republic, see J. Zarusky, *Die deutschen Sozialdemokraten und das sowjetische Modell. Ideologische Auseinandersetzungen und aussenpolitische Konzeptionen 1917–1933* (Munich, 1992); D. Klenke, *Die SPD-Linke in der Weimarer Republik* (Münster, 1983); A. Kastning, *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie zwischen Koalition und Opposition 1919–1923* (Paderborn, 1970); Rudolph, *Die sächsische Sozialdemokratie*.
16. On this, see Rudolph, *Die sächsische Sozialdemokratie*, pp. 419ff.
17. For the dictatorial plans of von Seeckt, see Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Republik*, p. 43.

# 15 The Central Apparatus of the Comintern

## New Statistical Evidence

Peter Huber

The opening of the Moscow archives has enabled us to study in greater detail the authorities which regulated the living and working conditions of Communist International (Comintern) functionaries resident in Russia. There is no mention of these important organs in the Comintern's official publications. The International's Administrative Department (*Upravlenie delami*) was responsible for lodging, paying and feeding the staff and also looked after the material needs of the apparatus (typewriters, furniture, holiday homes, security, and so on).<sup>1</sup> Between 1919 and 1943 several offices were responsible for employing, relocating and dismissing people within the apparatus. These organs changed every time the leadership apparatus was restructured and were answerable only for particular staff categories. This second area was covered by the Organisation Bureau (Orgburo, 1924–26), the Standing Commission (1926–33), the Little Commission (1926–33), the Politcomission (1929–35) and the Secretariat (1935–41). Analysing staffing decisions leads us, in a third step, to the internal structure of the Moscow apparatus. Initial staffing figures for the departments and regional secretariats now give us a more precise picture of the division of labour within the apparatus and of the various nationalities of the staff. First, we will give a rough survey of the *departments*, which until 1929 formed the backbone of the Moscow apparatus.

### 1. The Heads and Staff of the Departments

The subdivision and extension of the apparatus did not make progress until 1923, after the Fourth World Congress. The increasing division of

responsibilities within the hitherto provisional Moscow apparatus and the adoption of Russian Party methods was the result of political defeats in the West.<sup>2</sup> These setbacks in the West lent strength to the arguments of those in the Comintern who blamed the débâcle on lack of discipline, poor organisation and division of responsibility. Up to 1928–29 the departments, with their specific competencies, were the apparatus's centre of gravity:

*Organisation Department (1923–35)*

*Heads:* O. Piatnitskii, from 1928 B.A. Vasil'ev. Until 1926 the Organisation Department, together with the Agitprop Department, the Information Department and the Department of International Communication (OMS), was the heart of the apparatus. In December 1926 the Presidium gave it the following duties: 'As the Orgburo has been disbanded, the Organisation Department will have to deal with the CP representatives' organisational reports and papers and with the reports made by their representatives on the organisational work of the communist groupings in the international mass organisations.'<sup>3</sup> Between 1933 and 1935 it was called 'The Department for Building up the Party' with a staff of only seven.

*OMS (1921–35)*

*Heads:* Piatnitskii, P. A. Vompe, A.E. Abramovich ('Albrecht'), from 1927 J. Abramov.<sup>4</sup> Although it was a department of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), and was represented in its leading organs by Abramov from 1927 onwards, the OMS was not mentioned in either the budget or the personnel plans of the ECCI. Remarks about the OMS were not entered in the minutes of the regular consultations on departmental problems held in the ECCI Central Office. In 1926, the Moscow Central Office of the OMS had a staff of 33. In 1936 it was restructured, penetrated by the NKVD and renamed Liaison Service (*Sluzhby sviazi*). *Heads:* B.N. Melnikov ('Müller', 1937), M.A. Trilisser ('Moskvin', 1938), P.A. Sukharev (1939–41).<sup>5</sup>

*Agitprop Department (1920–33)*

*Heads:* B. Kun (until 1925), J. Pogany (1926–27), Stepkov (1928),

D. Petrovskii (1928–29), S.I. Gopner (1930–33). It comprised three sub-departments: Agitation, Propaganda and Press.<sup>6</sup> In 1933 it was divided into:

- (a) 'Commission for Popularising Socialist Construction in the USSR', headed by I.I. Chernin, retaining a staff of only six. Dissolved in 1935.
- (b) 'Commission for the Struggle against War, Fascism and Social Democracy', headed by B. Kun, retaining a staff of only six. Dissolved in 1935.<sup>7</sup>

*Department for Propaganda and Mass Organisations (1935–39)*

*Head:* K. Gottwald. In summer 1936 it was given a new dimension and renamed the 'Department for Propaganda and Press'. *Head:* P. Togliatti; Chernin headed the press section and H. Remmele the propaganda section.<sup>8</sup>

*Department for Propaganda (1939–43)*

*Head:* Lovchuk. Subdivided into the 'Editing and Publishing Section' and the 'Library'; in 1941 this department had a total staff of 23.<sup>9</sup>

*Department for Press and Agitation (1939–43)*

*Head:* B. Geminder ('Friedrich') with a staff of 39 (1941). Subdivided into:

- (a) 'Press Section and Telegraph Agency', *Head:* F. Glaubauf. Staff of twelve.
- (b) 'Information Section', *Head:* S. Nogradi ('Kellermann'). Staff of thirteen.
- (c) 'Photo Service', *Head:* Becker, staff of four.
- (d) 'Radio Section', *Head:* H. Wehner ('Funk'). Staff of five.<sup>10</sup>

*Information Department (1924–29)*

*Heads:* E. Woog ('Stirner', 1924), Pogany ('Pepper', 1925), Humbert-Droz (1926), Shubin (1926), Ch. Wurm (1928–29). This department had a double responsibility: to inform the Comintern's leading organs about the work of the sections and, simultaneously, to keep the sections

informed about the discussions in the ECCI apparatus. In 1926 it had a staff of 27, mostly 'national reporters'. Dissolved in 1929 as part of the strengthening of the Regional Secretariats (*Ländersekretariate*).<sup>11</sup>

*Eastern Department (1920–26)*

*Heads:* G.I. Safarov, S. Katayama, F.F. Raskol'nikov ('Petrov'). In 1925–26, shortly before its dissolution and transformation into the East Regional Secretariat, it had a staff of fifteen.<sup>12</sup>

*Publishing Department (1921–35)*

*Head:* M. Kreps. Staff of fifteen in 1931, but downgraded in 1935 to a section (staff of sixteen) of the 'Department for Propaganda and Mass Organisations'.<sup>13</sup>

*Translation Department (1921–35)*

*Heads:* G.M. Gerisch (1928–29), A.A. Brigader (1930–32), F.W. Wendt (1933), Menkis (1934). In 1932 it had a staff of 71. For part of the time it was united with the Bureau of the Secretariat and the Publishing Department. From 1935 onwards it was called the 'Translation Bureaux' (staff of 62), and from 1941 the Translation Section (staff of 50).<sup>14</sup>

*Women's Department (1920–35)*

*Heads:* (all women): C. Zetkin (1920–29), V.A. Moirova (1930–31), H. Overlach (1931–32), K.I. Kirsanova (1935). Also known as the International Women's Secretariat. In 1932 staffed by seven women; three were left by 1934. At the end of 1935 it is clear that it was dissolved without replacement.<sup>15</sup>

*Department for Work in Rural Areas (1931–35)*

*Head:* V. Kolarov. In 1932 the department had a staff of three. In 1935 it was clearly dissolved without replacement. The more important 'International Agrarian Institute' (MAI) does not appear in the ECCI budget since it was financed by the Soviet state.<sup>16</sup>

*Department for Cooperatives (1921–35)*

*Heads:* Tibot (1928–29), Oswald (1932–33). In 1926 this department had a staff of eight, increasing to nine by 1932. In 1935 it was dissolved without replacement.<sup>17</sup>

*Department for Building up the Party (1933–35)*

*Heads:* M. Heimo, G. Alikhanov. This department, with a staff of seven, represented the remnants of the liquidated Organisation Department, whose responsibilities were taken over by the Cadre Department in 1935.<sup>18</sup>

*Special Department (?–1932)*

*Head:* W. Kraevskii. In 1932 it had a staff of eight and was taken over by the Cadre Department.<sup>19</sup>

*Cadre Department (1932–43)*

*Heads:* Kraevskii, M. Chernomordik (1936), Alikhanov (1937), G.P. Damianov ('Belov', 1937), M. Andreev (1938), L.A. Guliaev (1939–43), K.F. Vilkov (1942–44 in Ufa). In summer 1932 it absorbed the Organisation Department's Cadre Section and the Special Department and in 1935 the 'Department for Building up the Party'. Thirteen staff in 1934, 31 in 1935, 64 in 1938 and 48 in 1941.<sup>20</sup>

*Administrative Department (1920–41)*

*Heads:* M.M. Kivilovich (1925–27), I.Ia. Koganitskii (1928–30), Frido (1931), V.K. Sander (1932–33), J.P. Brandt (1933–36), Samsonov (1937), Dedkov (1938), T.I. Pisarenko (1939–41). The administrative department maintained and guarded the ECCI building and looked after the staff. In 1932 it had a staff of 58 and by 1941 as many as 191!<sup>21</sup>

*International Control Commission (1921–43)*

*Chair:* Zetkin, P. Stuchka, Ia. Anvel't, W. Florin. The 1932 ECCI budget lists a staff of three, for 1935 eight and for 1941 seven. Between 1924 and the beginning of the first show trial in 1936 the ICC dealt with 1,114 cases, 231 of them in 1935.<sup>22</sup>

## 2. The Administrative Department

The basic facts about the expansion and structure of the ECCI apparatus in the period of the formation of departments and leading organs during 1922–24 have long been known from Comintern publications. It is understandable that the Department of International Communication (OMS), which worked underground, is not mentioned in these publications. Researchers have noted this fact.<sup>23</sup> The Comintern also maintained complete silence about the Administrative Department; the only mention of it is in the memoirs of some Comintern staff. Until the archives were opened there was no way researchers could approach the subject.<sup>24</sup>

In spring 1926, when an ECCI Commission was examining the apparatus and working out suggestions for improvements, it assigned the Administrative Department the following tasks: 'As the administrative-economic organ of the ECCI Secretariat the Administrative Department is responsible for drawing up and distributing the annual budget of the ECCI apparatus and is in charge of the Finance Department, the *Kommandatura*, the vehicle pool, the staff bureau and house administration for the ECCI'.<sup>25</sup> The following examples provide an idea of the Administrative Department's activities. Every year the Administrative Department, in both the Little Commission and the Standing Commission, produced the *Budget of the ECCI*, listing the wages and staff of the ECCI apparatus. In the agenda the point is usually called 'Confirmation of the Administrative Department's Budget' or 'The ECCI Budget'. The Little and Standing Commissions, which functioned as 'switchboards' for staffing the ECCI apparatus, moved people around after consulting the heads of department and the directors of the regional secretariats. As part of a resolution to 'slim down the ECCI apparatus', the Administrative Department was obliged to remove certain staff positions from the ECCI budget in 1932. On the whole these were not real reductions, but simply formal transfers to a related institution which did not appear in the ECCI budget (for instance, the OMS or Cadre Schools). Thus, in October 1932 the Little Commission ordered the Administrative Department to limit the Eastern Regional Secretariat to a staff of sixteen and also to transfer 'the comrades who are listed in the budgets of other institutions, partly or wholly to the budgets of those institutions'.<sup>26</sup>



Ordinary Comintern functionaries came to know another aspect of the Administrative Department. It assigned them their rooms in the Hotel Lux, paid their wages and organised various services to make day-to-day life easier (crèches, hairdressers, cooking, sewing and laundry facilities). Heading these services in Hotel Lux was a commandant whose regime constantly gave rise to complaints. The complaints of those quartered in the hotel concerned smells, rats, vermin and unjustified evictions, and they were brought up at sessions of the Standing Commission, but usually got nowhere.<sup>27</sup> In its function of guaranteeing the infrastructure, the Administrative Department ran a vehicle pool in 1931 with eleven automobiles and two motor-cycles, which could be used by the higher-ranking political staff. The vehicles were particularly popular because the ECCI 'Centre' at 16 Mokhovaia – opposite the Kremlin – moved to the south of the city in 1937 and then in February 1938 finally settled in the northern suburb of Rostokino. However, as a rule the cars were at the disposal of heads of administration, who also had the use of the ECCI-owned *dachas* on the outskirts of Moscow (Kuntsevo, Ilinskoe) and of a *sovkhoz* (state farm) for self-provisioning in Nemchinovka.<sup>28</sup>

The department was also responsible for the security of the building housing the ECCI. In the starvation years of 1931–32 it was less fear of spies that called for increased security measures than fear of the roving bands of thieves who were making the towns unsafe. The head of the Administrative Department, Sander, rearranged the watch 'on a military basis', put up its wages and got the green light from the Standing Commission to 'organise a night-watch in the street surrounding the ECCI building'. Tausik, successor to the Lux commandant Davidov, who had been removed for incompetence, was told at the same session to set up 'a special self-defence group made up of party comrades living in Lux'.<sup>29</sup>

Compared with the frequent changes in the 1920s at the top of other departments (for example, Agitprop and the Information Department), the leadership of the Administrative Department was impressively continuous. Before transferring to the Soviet economy, the two Russians Koganitskii (until 1929) and Kivilovich (until 1930) headed the department. They were replaced by two other Russians, Sander and Frido, who left in spring 1933, to be replaced by a certain Brandt. He stayed until September 1936, closely supervised by Trilisser ('Moskvín'),

who, as new ECCI Secretary from autumn 1935 until his arrest in 1938, was responsible for supervising the finances, the OMS and the Administrative Department.<sup>30</sup> After a very short reign by Samsonov, who was passed on to the Russian Party in November 1937, it appears that Dedkov and, as of 1940, Pisarenko headed the department. The Administrative Department of the Comintern turned out to be a Russian domain, in which it was an advantage to have knowledge of and connections with the Soviet economy.<sup>31</sup>

Because of the wide range of its responsibilities the Administrative Department needed a large staff and was numerically the strongest department (see Table 15.1):

*Table 15.1 The staff of the Administrative Department and its sections<sup>32</sup>*

1925		1932		1941	
Finance Department	8	Book-keeping	7	Book-keeping	9
<i>Kommandatura</i>	49	<i>Kommandatura</i>	42	<i>Kommandatura</i>	84
Vehicle pool	24	Vehicle pool	32	Provisions	5
Staff Bureau	2	Store	1	Housekeeping	72
Various	11	Management	8	Various	21
<i>Total</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>191</i>

It is difficult to make comparisons with the strength of other departments because certain departments, or parts of them, were not included annually in the ECCI staff plans. First among these was the OMS, which was missing from them even more frequently than the Administrative Department, even though it was represented in the leading organs of the ECCI by Piatnitskii, Abramovich ('Albrecht') and Abramov. Of the 346 employees of the Moscow ECCI apparatus in 1926 – including the OMS – 97 (28 per cent) worked for the Administrative Department and 33 (10 per cent) for the OMS.<sup>33</sup>

### 3. Personnel Decisions

The Executive Committee of the Communist International, as the highest organ between congresses, chose the *leading organs*. The

Comintern made no secret of who staffed them. For their part the Presidium, Orgburo and the Secretariat or the Politsecretariat delegated certain powers concerning the employing of staff to commissions, whose area of responsibility is only now coming to light.<sup>34</sup>

During the phase in which the apparatus was being consolidated (1924–26), the Orgburo determined how many people the departments could employ. It was left to the departmental heads to apply for competent staff from the member parties. The frequent appeals from Moscow to help strengthen the apparatus show that the parties were not very keen to relinquish cadres to the ‘Centre’.<sup>35</sup> The Orgburo had to keep on telling heads of department to fill up the gaps in the apparatus and to submit the names to prove that they had done so. Thus, in the minutes dated 9 October 1924 we read: ‘The Organisation Department is required to hasten the completion of the staff. Final suggestions should be submitted by 1 November at the latest.’<sup>36</sup> Even in these early stages the Orgburo and the ECCI Secretariat fell back on the rather well-known method of setting up commissions to deal with problems, which, however, instead of lightening the top functionaries’ agenda, merely made it more burdensome. Evidence of a ‘Commission to Improve the Comintern Apparatus’ in autumn 1925 and an ‘Apparatus Commission’ in spring 1926 suggests the establishment of narrower bodies, consisting of members of the Orgburo and the Secretariat, to dismiss, confirm or refuse to employ new staff. One example is that of the ‘Publishing Department (French Section)’. When discussing the affairs of this department, the ‘Apparatus Commission’, consisting of Piatnitskii, O. Geschke and Heimo, stated: ‘Comrades Kaminskii, Levinson, Revo, Rusakova to be dismissed and (female) Comrade Drogotshiner to be put at the disposal of the PCF [French party]. Comrade Weiner to be made Secretary of the French Section. (Female) Comrade Gaillard to be made French shorthand-writer and technical secretary of the French-speaking Regional Secretariat.’<sup>37</sup> In its next session the high-ranking commission, without giving any reason, refused the application of the ECCI Secretary and Orgburo member, Jules Humbert-Droz, to employ his wife in the regional secretariat that he headed: ‘Proposal by Com. Humbert-Droz to employ (female) Comrade Humbert-Droz as an assistant in the French-speaking Regional Secretariat – refused.’<sup>38</sup>

Between 1926 and 1933 the Secretariat (from 1927 renamed the

Politsecretariat) was assisted by two commissions for dealing with staffing questions. From March 1926 the Little Commission (also known as the Select Commission) devoted itself to 'questions of a strictly confidential nature'. Its work included 'Confirming the employment and dismissal of responsible political staff in the ECCI apparatus; resolutions concerning any expenditure by the apparatus and the publishing office exceeding 5,000 roubles.'<sup>39</sup>

The Standing Commission also decided staffing questions and consisted partly of the same people as the Little Commission. The duties of the two commissions were so similar that in the archives the classification of their minutes is confused. As part of the political 'purging' of the ECCI apparatus in autumn 1929 the Standing Commission set up a commission consisting of W. Ulbricht, Piatnitskii, Vasil'ev, Mirov (Cells Bureau), Heimo and Abramov (OMS).<sup>40</sup> At the beginning of the 1930s at the latest, worries about the political reliability of the ECCI staff became a central issue. Comrade Sirotinskii, deputy head of the OMS and head of the 'Confidential Instructors Sub-Department', told the Little Commission to be on the watch for 'penetration of the ECCI apparatus by foreign and even hostile elements'. Until 1931 the Little Commission (or the Standing Commission) and the Politcommission, which had been dealing with administrative matters on behalf of the Politsecretariat since autumn 1929, had the exclusive authority to employ new staff.

In 1931 these bodies were still dividing up the responsibilities among themselves as follows: 'The Politcommission will appoint politically responsible staff (heads of the Regional Secretariats and Departments and their deputies, editors and responsible editorial secretaries for the periodicals, and instructors). The Standing Commission will appoint referents, heads of technical departments, Regional Secretariat and Department secretaries, translators and people gaining work experience'.<sup>41</sup> The following example proves that not all the requests put forward by heads of department (M.E. Kreps) and by an ECCI Secretary (O. Kuusinen) received the necessary support: 'Proposal by Com. Kreps and Com. Kuusinen to employ (female) Com. Girich as editorial secretary for the periodical *Under the Banner of Marxism* and to find her somewhere to live – refused, as Com. Girich is not suitable for this post'.<sup>42</sup> In autumn 1931 under a new ruling two more bodies suddenly appear, which in summer 1932 were to combine to form the

Cadre Department: the Organisation Department's Cadre Section and the 'Sub-Department of Confidential Labour Service'. They were closely linked to the Russian Party and the OGPU and it was their job to look closely into the past lives of applicants nominated by the Politcommission or the Little Commission. These links with the OGPU were not a dead letter, as is shown by the correspondence in the cadre file of the Swiss, Berta Zimmermann, in which Sirotinskii makes the following request of Comrade Formaister of the 'Special Department of the OGPU': 'In view of her application to work for the OMS, we request an investigation of Comrade Berta Zimmermann. Enclosures: two questionnaires and photos'.<sup>43</sup>

In the staff plan for 1932 we find for the first time an eight-strong 'Special Department', which as early as the summer merged with the Organisation Department's Cadre Section to form the Cadre Department. This department, set up on the Russian pattern, put an end to the staffing policy, split as it was between the Little Commission, the Standing Commission and the Politcommission. The files of the Little Commission dwindle away in 1933 and those of the Standing Commission in February 1934. After this simplification the Politcommission decided all requests for personnel, which the heads of the departments and the regional secretariats laid before them after approval by the Cadre Department; the Administrative Department was responsible for employing technicians.<sup>44</sup>

The Seventh World Congress and the restructuring of the entire Moscow apparatus, which started in autumn 1935,<sup>45</sup> put personnel decisions into the hands of the ten-strong ECCI Secretariat, which, before making any resolutions, had the Cadre Department investigate biographical data and certificates of political good conduct: 'On the basis of the submitted documents the Cadre Department will deal with the application of the responsible Secretary or Head of Department wishing to employ the comrade in question'. After this preliminary investigation, the ECCI Secretary who wanted to employ someone new in his regional department proposed his candidate at the next ECCI Secretariat session. As a rule the ECCI Secretaries acceded to his request. In the minutes we see the following procedure: 'Comrade Moskvín's application to have Comrade Solomov as his political aide – the application is accepted'.<sup>46</sup> The combined ECCI Secretaries had only to confirm the apparatus's political staff (assistant secretaries, referents,

heads of department and their deputies); General Secretary Georgi Dimitrov dealt with technical staff 'at the application of Comrade Moskvín, who is in charge of the general supervision of the whole apparatus'. The same procedure was used for apportioning leave.<sup>47</sup>

It is not surprising that the ECCI Secretariat undertook politically-motivated dismissals, particularly in the years of the Terror, 1936–38. The present availability of sources makes it impossible to decide whether it initiated dismissals by arousing suspicion, or whether, on the contrary, only reacted to Party exclusions by the ECCI Party organisation or to NKVD arrests. It is our belief that in the 'triangular game' between the ECCI Secretaries, the Party organisation and the NKVD all combinations were possible.<sup>48</sup> The ECCI minutes substantiate all variations. On the whole, the ECCI Secretaries reacted with a dismissal once the Party organisation had started proceedings or had concluded matters by exclusion from the Party. For its part the Party organisation often used exclusion to ratify actions already concluded by the NKVD. Certainly in the case of Chernin, the ECCI Secretaries or Togliatti alone started the ball rolling. In December 1936, Togliatti formulated the following motion against his deputy, Chernin, the head of the Press Section: 'In view of the fact that Com. Chernin kept his active Trotskyist fight against the CPSU (1923/1924) secret from the ECCI leadership, he should be immediately relieved of his work in the ECCI apparatus.' The Secretaries decided merely to remove Chernin from his posts as Togliatti's deputy and as head of the Press Section. The ECCI Party Organisation waited over five months before excluding Chernin, whereupon the Secretaries doubled back and removed Chernin – who had not at that point been arrested by the NKVD – 'from the staff list of the apparatus of the Secretariat of the ECCI'.<sup>49</sup>

#### **4. The Apparatus in Figures**

Even now it is difficult to find figures concerning the Moscow apparatus. The reason for this is not just the proverbial affectation of mysteriousness surrounding the Comintern apparatus from its earliest days, but also the leading bodies' lack of interest in statistics, which persisted until the beginning of the 1930s. When, in 1931, the Little Commission requested Tsirol', head of the newly formed 'Cadre

Section' in the Organisation Department, to submit figures to the apparatus on the basis of the personal dossiers, he indignantly reported being faced with 'chaos': 'If anyone thinks the staff's personal dossiers are filed tidily and according to year, he is mistaken. The dossiers piled up in the cellar are often soaked through and rotting away, not just the ones going back to 1920 but even the latest ones from 1930.'<sup>50</sup> Things did not get better until 1932 when the newly formed Cadre Department set about systematising information on the staff. As these files are, to a great extent, closed to research, we are dependent on individual documents which, at some time in the dim and distant past, took the official path into files that are now open.<sup>51</sup>

The following figures on the Moscow apparatus must be approached with caution. Certain departments (OMS) or sections of them (the Administrative Department's *Kommandatura*) do not always appear in the annual staff plans, and some of the Publishing Department's employees were not integrated into the ECCI budget. The expression 'ECCI apparatus' is therefore hazy, its limits undefined. The annual budget presented by the Comintern's Administrative Department included the apparatus of the Communist Youth International (CYI), but not that of the Profintern, the Peasants' International and the Sport International. And then, of course, there was always the last doubtful factor of the 'technical staff' – as opposed to the 'political' – who were often not included in the figures. Table 15.2 gives an impression of the apparatus as it was at the end of the constructional phase, 1922–24.

Russian employees accounted for only 45.4 per cent, a figure which was to change only slightly by 1933. In fact, in the three central political departments (Organisation, Agitprop, Information) Russians accounted for only 36 per cent. The two departments with the most staff are clearly the Administrative Department (including the *Kommandatura*) and the Publishing Department (including press and translation), two typical 'service undertakings' with a high percentage of 'technical' staff. Since the members of the Administrative Department's staff are not listed according to nationality we cannot prove our suspicion, for the year 1926, that they were mostly Russian.<sup>52</sup> As for non-Russians in the apparatus, Germans were clearly in the lead, followed by French, British and Swiss. Unfortunately, the 1926 questionnaire does not list 'Jewish' as a nationality, in contrast to a 1933 set of

Table 15.2 *The staff of the ECCI departments in 1926*<sup>53</sup>

	Total	Rus	Ger	Fr	GB	Switz	Hung	USA	Pol
Organisation Dept	16	5	3	1		2	1		1
Agitprop Department	18	11					4		2
Information Department	27	6	5		1	3	3	2	1
Publishing Department	63	26	12	11	7	1		4	1
Eastern Department	32	19			1			1	
Women's Department	6	3	2			1			
Dept. for Co-operatives	8	6	2						
Administrative Dept	97	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
OMS	33	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
Secretariat of CYI (KIM)	29	14	9	1					
Secretariat of ECCI	17	8	5			2			
<i>Total</i>	346								
<i>Per cent</i>		45.4	17.6	6.0	4.2	4.2	3.7	3.2	2.3

Table 15.3 *Apparatus staff by nationality, 1933 (per cent)*<sup>54</sup>

Russian	47.3
Jewish	13.4
German	9.1
Latvian	5.7
French	3.6
English	3.2
Hungarian	2.7
Polish	2.7

statistics which lists Jews as the second most numerous nationality after Russians (Table 15.3).

From 1928 onwards the regional secretariats played an increasingly important role. Originally conceived as auxiliary organs for the ECCI Secretaries and Presidium, their staff was increased from year to year at the expense of the political departments. Symptomatic of this refocusing around the Politcommission and the regional secretariats



was the liquidation of the Information Department in October 1929. In May 1932 the Standing Commission approved a staffing plan agreed by the Administrative Department in co-operation with the heads of the departments and the regional secretariats (Table 15.4).

*Table 15.4 The staff of the departments and the regional secretariats (1932)*<sup>55</sup>

Presidium of ECCI	10
Secretariat of Politcommission	13
Bureau of Secretariat (with Archives)	29
<i>Regional Secretariats:</i>	
Central European	14
Romance	12
Anglo-American	12
Latin American	8
East	19
Polish-Baltic	8
Balkan	9
Scandinavian	6
Organisation Department	13
Agitprop Department	12
Publishing Department	16
Translation Department	71
Women's Department	7
Department for Co-operatives	9
Department for Work in Rural Areas	3
Administrative Department (with Garage)	90
OMS	?
Special Department	8
Library/Newspaper Expedition	14
Practicians	20
International Control Commission	3
Editorial staff of <i>Communist International</i>	7
Protection of Fraternal Parties	5
Apparatus of CYI (KIM)	55
<i>Total</i>	<i>473</i>

Thus, together with the 21 employees at the OMS in 1931, the Moscow apparatus of the ECCI and the CYI employed some 500 persons in 1932. In 1931 the Administrative Department's financial section was paying 447 employees every month – not counting the OMS – which is not far off our calculations. In 1933 Tsirul', deputy head of the Cadre Department, reported as many as 666 employees, of whom the Cadre Department possessed a proper dossier on only 526. Indeed, in a letter dated 2 March 1933 to Piatnitskii and Chernomordik, Tsirul' estimated that the apparatus had 800 employees, since neither the publishing staff nor the Hotel Lux employees appeared in the ECCI budget.<sup>56</sup>

By 1933 we find more and more mention in the apparatus's leading bodies of 'reducing the apparatus'; many and various were the internal scenarios worked out to put an end to the 'extensive parallelism in the work of the Departments and the Regional Secretariats'. This call for resizing was followed by deeds. The dissolution of the Agitprop Department and the Organisation Department was carried out in 1933.<sup>57</sup> We will leave aside the question of whether signals came from the top Soviet leadership to cut back the not very highly regarded ECCI apparatus. The reorganisation which took place in autumn 1935 – the dissolution of the regional secretariats and the strengthening of the ten ECCI secretariats – cost an unknown number of employees their jobs. The new staff plan (excluding CYI, OMS and the *Kommandatura*) allowed for only 336 persons; it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which the deconstruction of the central apparatus resulted in a counter-expansion of the institutions which did not formally belong to the ECCI. It is probable that here, too, the practice mentioned above of 'exporting' posts from the ECCI budget and thrusting them on related institutions was again brought into play. For instance, in 1935 the Publishing Department employed 65 individuals, of whom 'eight are to be paid from the ECCI budget and the rest from the publishing house's income'. However, the publishing house in question, the 'Publishing Co-operative of Foreign Workers in the Soviet Union' (PCFWSU), employed no fewer than 185 in spring 1937.<sup>58</sup>

The final ECCI staff plan from spring 1941 (including the *Kommandatura*) shows only a minimum staff reduction compared with the reduced staff plan of autumn 1935. The Cadre Department still had a staff of 48; on the other hand the Secretaries, their apparatus and the

Party representatives plummeted from 94 to 54 – an expression of the political defeats suffered in the meantime by the Comintern (and the Soviet Union) (Table 15.5).

*Table 15.5 ECCI staff in March 1941* <sup>59</sup>

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Secretaries	9
Apparatus of Secretariat	35
Central archives	12
Representatives of Parties	10
International Control Commission	7
Cadre Department	48
Department for Press and Agitation	39
Translation Section	50
Department for Propaganda	23
Editorial staff of <i>Communist International</i>	4
Administrative Department	191
<i>Total</i>	<i>429</i>

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Immediately obvious is the volume of the Administrative Department, which alone accounts for 45 per cent of the apparatus. Although the European communist parties were destroyed or driven underground by prohibition, Moscow kept up an apparatus only slightly smaller than in the euphoric years of the Popular Front (in Moscow the years of the Terror). Obviously the Soviet leadership wanted to keep all its options open and regarded the Moscow apparatus and the illegal foreign cadre linked with it as a welcome reservoir of strength which could still be useful to the Soviet Union. After the invasion by the German Army and the evacuation to Kuibishev and Ufa in the late autumn of 1942, the Red Army was able to make use of the remnants of the Comintern apparatus either to get news through to the West or to work as propaganda officers on the home front.<sup>60</sup>

## Notes

1. In spring 1994 the files of the Administrative Department (fond 495, opis' 65 and 65a) were not accessible. I have relied on indications to be found in the minutes of

- the Standing Commission (f. 495, op. 7), the Secretariat (f. 495, op. 18), the Commission for Reorganising the Apparatus (f. 495, op. 46) and in those of the Bureau of the Secretariat (f. 495, op. 20) of the former Central Party Archive, renamed in 1991 *Rossiiskii tsentr khraneniia i izucheniiia dokumentov noveishei istorii*, Moscow (hereafter RTsKhIDNI).
2. See A. Agosti, 'World Revolution and the World Party for the Revolution', paper delivered to the International Symposium, 'The History of the Comintern in the Light of New Documents', Moscow, 20–22 October 1994.
  3. Presidium resolution, 20 December 1926, RTsKhIDNI 495/46/9.
  4. Minutes of the Little Commission, 16 April 1926, RTsKhIDNI, 495/6/1. An obituary of P. A. Vompe can be found in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, no. 120 (1925).
  5. Figures from RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/7, 'Ergebnisse der Reorganisation' [undated, May 1926]. On the demise of the OMS in 1935, see P. Huber, *Stalins Schatten in die Schweiz. Schweizer Kommunisten in Moskau: Gefangene und Verteidiger der Komintern* (Zürich, 1994), pp. 29–37.
  6. Minutes of the 'Kommission zur Verbesserung der Arbeit des Apparates', 12 November 1926, RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/3.
  7. Politcommission resolution, 15 September 1933, RTsKhIDNI, 495/4/261.
  8. 'Reorganisierung der Abteilung für Propaganda und Massenorganisationen', 9 July 1936, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1099.
  9. Personnel plan 18 March 1941, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1330.
  10. Ibid.
  11. Minutes 'Informationsberatung', 5 November 1925, RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/3. 'Propositions en liaison avec la liquidation de la section d'information', 11 October 1929, RTsKhIDNI, 495/20/763. In her memoirs A. Kuusinen also mentions Gusev as Head of Department for 1924, but we found no documentary evidence of this: see A. Kuusinen, *Quand Dieu renverse son ange* (Paris, 1974), p. 41.
  12. List [undated], RTsKhIDNI, 495/19/398a. Minutes No. 2 of the Reorganisation Commission [undated, March 1926], RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/7. Katayama is mentioned in F. Svátek, 'Gli organi dirigenti dell'Internazionale comunista: loro sviluppo e composizione (1919–1943)', *Movimento operaio e socialista*, Nos 1–3 (1977), pp. 311–12. On Safarov's election, see Comintern Secretariat (ed.), *Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Präsidiums und der Exekutive der Komintern* (Hamburg, 1922), p. 73.
  13. Personnel Plan, 8 January 1931, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/16; minutes of the Secretariat, 2 October 1935, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1020.
  14. Ibid; Personnel Plan, 18 March 1941, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1330.
  15. Personnel Plan 1932, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/21; minutes of the Staff Commission, 8 December 1934, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/38; minutes of the Secretariat, 2 October 1935, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1020.
  16. Personnel Plan 1932, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/21.
  17. Ibid; 'Ergebnisse der Reorganisation' [undated, May 1926], RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/7.
  18. Minutes of the Personnel Commission, 8 December 1934, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/38.
  19. Personnel Plan 1932, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/21.

20. Huber, *Stalins Schatten in die Schweiz*, pp. 20–28; Bernhard H. Bayerlein, ‘Vom Geflecht des Terrors zum Kartell des Todes? Erste Einblicke in die Mechanismen und Strukturen von Komintern und KPdSU’, in H. Weber and D. Staritz (eds), *Kommunisten verfolgen Kommunisten. Stalinistischer Terror und Säuberungen in den kommunistischen Parteien Europas seit den dreissiger Jahren* (Berlin, 1993), pp. 103–24.
21. Structure and Staffing, 8 February 1936, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1075.
22. ‘Über die Arbeit der IKK’, 9 July 1936, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1099. On the ICC, see B.H. Bayerlein, ‘Vorzeichen des Terrors und der Moskauer Prozesse: Die Internationale Kontrollkommission’, in Fondation Jules Humbert-Droz (ed.), *Colloque sur l’Internationale communiste* (La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1992), pp. 531–56.
23. For instance, B. Lazitch, ‘La formation de la section des liaisons internationales du Komintern (OMS) 1921–1923’, *Communisme*, No. 4 (1983), pp. 65–80. Indications in Comintern publications can be found in *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale Petrograd-Moskau vom 5 November bis 5. Dezember 1922* (Hamburg, 1923), pp. 803–23, 994–7; *Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale vom IV. bis zum V. Weltkongress* (Hamburg, 1924), pp. 79–107. In the latter report the OMS is actually mentioned, but a veil is deliberately drawn over its activities in that it is credited with distributing literature to the Sections (p. 107).
24. On memoirs, see A. Kuusinen, *Quand Dieu renverse son ange*, p. 41.
25. ‘Material on the report about the results of the reorganisation of the work of the ECCI and its organs’ [undated, May 1926], RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/7.
26. ‘Handling the 1933 budget’, in Minutes, 29 October 1932, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/24; see also Minutes, 28 March 1933, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/25.
27. See the complaint of the Swiss, S. Bamatter, 6 September 1926, RTsKhIDNI, 495/6/43; ‘Working plan of the ECCI administrative leadership’, 22 January 1934, RTsKhIDNI, 495/20/840.
28. ‘On the Condition of the Vehicle Transport Department’, 18 January 1931, RTsKhIDNI, 495/6/20; ‘Re. Sovkhoz in Nemchinovka’, in Minutes 25 December 1932, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/24; ‘Working plan of the ECCI administrative leadership’, 22 January 1934, RTsKhIDNI, 495/20/840.
29. Minutes, 13 March 1932, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/20. On the removal of Davidov, who was relegated to the position of auxiliary commandant of the ‘Mokhovaia’, see the Minutes of the Standing Commission, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/17.
30. On personnel changes at the top of the Departments and Regional Secretariats, see P. Huber, ‘The Structure and Division of Responsibility in the ECCI Apparatus 1919–1943’, paper delivered to the International Symposium, ‘The History of the Comintern in the Light of New Documents’, Moscow, 20–22 October 1994; Minutes of the Secretariat, 5 September 1936, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1112.
31. Minutes of the Secretariat, 25 November 1937, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1228.
32. Figures for 1925 from Minutes of Consultations with the Departments, 30 November 1925, RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/3; figures for 1932 from Staff List 1932, in Minutes of the Standing Commission, 8 May 1932, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/21; figures for 1941 from ‘Apparatus Staff 1941’, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1330.
33. ‘Material concerning the Report about the Results of the Reorganisation of the

- Work of the ECCI and its Organs' [undated, May 1926], RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/7.
34. On research to date, see Svátek, 'Gli organi dirigenti dell'Internazionale comunista'; J. Degras (ed.), *The Communist International 1919-1943: Documents*, Vols 1-3 (London, 1956/1960/1971); V. Kahan, 'The Communist International 1919-1943: The Personnel of its Highest Bodies', *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 21 (1976), pp. 151-85.
  35. See the call for action from Togliatti in *Protokoll der Erweiterten Exekutive der Komintern, Moskau 22. November bis 16. Dezember 1926* (Hamburg, 1927), pp. 842-3.
  36. Minutes of the Orgburo, 9 October 1924, RTsKhIDNI, 495/26/9; see the complaint from E. Woog ('Stirner'), head of the Information Department, about lack of cadre in 'Letter to the Secretariat', 3 October 1924, RTsKhIDNI, 495/274/236, Cadre File L. Dübi.
  37. Minutes 23 March 1926, RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/7. 'Revo' is the pseudonym of the Austrian Otto Machl (1898-1973). Rusakova was still working in the Translation Department in 1931; Drogotshiner is sometimes spelt Doreaugoginère (Dorogoiner) (495/165/325); a certain S.A. Weiner was working in the Romance Section of the 'Foreign Workers' Co-operative Publishing Office' in March 1936 (495/18/1081); Mireille Gaillard worked for *Inprekorr* in Berlin in 1932.
  38. Minutes No. 2 [undated, March 1926], RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/7; Biographical details on Jenny Humbert-Droz (1892- ) and Jules Humbert-Droz (1891-1971) in Huber, *Stalins Schatten in die Schweiz*, pp. 301-2.
  39. 'Resolution of the Secretariat concerning the tasks and working methods of the Secretariat's Little Commission' [undated, 1926], RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/7; 'Statutes for the ECCI, its organs and apparatus', 30 March 1926, *ibid.* The Russian for Little or Select Commission is 'Malaia Komissiiia'; months later the ECCI Presidium decreed: 'The Political Secretariat selects the Little Commission from among its members to deal with covert and important administrative matters': see Resolution of the Presidium, RTsKhIDNI, 495/19/398a.
  40. Minutes, 24 August 1929, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/11. On the result, see F. Firsov, 'Die Säuberungen im Apparat der Komintern', in Weber and Staritz (eds), *Kommunisten verfolgen Kommunisten*, pp. 37-51; in the files of the 'Little Commission' (495/6) there are also Standing Commission Minutes (495/6/21).
  41. Standing Commission Minutes, 3 January 1931, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/16; letter from Sirotinskii, 24 September 1930, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/15.
  42. Standing Commission Minutes, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/19.
  43. Letter from Sirotinskii, 20 August 1931; see also the letter from Sirotinskii, 8 September 1931, RTsKhIDNI, cadre file B. Zimmermann; resolution on employment in the apparatus, 7 October 1931, RTsKhIDNI, 495/20/764.
  44. 'Suggestions concerning apparatus staff', Standing Commission Minutes, 28 March 1933, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/25; see for instance Politcommission 11 May 1935, RTsKhIDNI, 495/4/349; on the dissolution of the Standing Commission, see 'Commission to Investigate the Work of the Administrative Department and the Standing Commission', 16 February 1934, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/38.
  45. See the eleven-page Secretariat resolution dated 2 October 1935, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1020, published in P. Huber, 'L'appareil du Komintern 1926-1935:

- premier aperçu', in *Communisme*, Nos 40–41 (1995), pp. 9–35; also B. Studer, *Un Parti sous influence: Le parti communiste suisse, une section du Komintern 1931 à 1939* (Lausanne, 1994), p. 161.
46. Minutes, 17 January 1937, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1155, with added 'character sketch' of Solomov; 'On the procedure to be followed for admission into the ECCI apparatus', 8 February 1936, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1073. Here we must mention, as an exception to the rule, K. Gottwald's objection to the employment of the Englishman Ben Francis: see appendix to Minutes, 11 September 1937, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1224.
  47. Minutes, 11 April 1936, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1083; 'On the procedure' (see previous note).
  48. The files 'Party organisation in the ECCI' (495/546) and 'Central Committee CPSU' (17) became unavailable in 1994. Fridrikh I. Firsov was still able to consult the two files in 1992: see above, Firsov, 'Die Säuberungen'.
  49. Secretariat Minutes, 31 July 1937 RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1213; 'List' 23 October 1937, signed Kotel'nikov, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1227; 'Draft of a resolution of the ECCI Secretariat', signed 'Ercoli' [Togliatti], in Minutes, 19 December 1936, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1131.
  50. Report 'To the Little Commission', 21 October 1931, RTsKhIDNI, 495/25/205.
  51. Secretariat Piatnitskii (495/19), Commission for Reorganising the Apparatus (495/46), Organisation Department (495/20), Secretariat (495/18).
  52. The large number of Russian names in the Administrative Department appearing in the 1932 staff plan clearly indicates Russian dominance: see 'ECCI budget for 1932', RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/21.
  53. This table is the result of two sets of statistics which partly overlap but differ very little from each other: see 'Material on the report about the results of the reorganisation of the work of the ECCI and its apparatus' [summer 1926], RTsKhIDNI, 495/46/7; 'Report on the ECCI staff and apparatus' [1926], RTsKhIDNI, 495/19/398a. The first set of statistics also includes the editorial staff (3) of *The Communist International* and the staff (27) of Zinoviev's Secretariat; both sets include technical staff.
  54. Report from Tsrul', 'ECCI Employees', 28 March 1933, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/25. Tsrul' was able to evaluate questionnaires filled in by 528 Comintern staff.
  55. Standing Commission Minutes and appendix, 8 May 1932, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/21.
  56. Letter 2 March 1933, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/981; report of Tsrul', 'To the Little Commission', 21 October 1931, RTsKhIDNI, 495/25/205; report of Tsrul', 'ECCI Employees', 28 March 1933, RTsKhIDNI, 495/7/25.
  57. See P. Huber, 'Departments and Regional Secretariats 1933', *The International Newsletter of Historical Studies on Comintern, Communism and Stalinism*, Vol. 2 (1995), pp. 69–73; letter from Tsrul' and Chernomordik, 2 March 1933, RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/981.
  58. List [undated] RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1081; Politcommission Minutes, 3 July 1935, RTsKhIDNI, 495/4/353; figures on the reconstruction from RTsKhIDNI, 495/18/1020 and 495/18/1073.
  59. Defined more precisely in P. Huber, 'Les organes dirigeantes du Komintern: un chantier permanent', paper delivered to the symposium, 'Archives et

- historiographie des Internationales', Dijon, December 1994.
60. There has been little research so far into the role of the Comintern in the Second World War; material can be found, however, in the memoirs of P. Robotti, *La Prova* (Bari, 1965), pp. 302–65; and Wolfgang Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder* (Cologne, 1987), pp. 157–245.



# 16 Comintern, Stalinism and Totalitarianism

Kevin McDermott

The concept of totalitarianism has enjoyed a marked revival since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Scholars and commentators, especially in Eastern Europe, have returned to the idea of 'totalitarianism' to define not only Stalinist Russia, but also the post-Stalin regimes that dominated the region, and this regardless of the cogent challenges to the concept which began in the late 1960s.<sup>1</sup> This durability of the term suggests that it incorporates some essential truths about the nature of Soviet-style communism. But how relevant is this concept for an understanding of the Comintern and the international communist movement in the inter-war period? Several leading experts have adopted the thesis of totalitarianism to describe the political evolution of the Comintern. For instance, Milorad Drachkovitch and Branko Lazitch wrote in an article published in 1966 that 'the conditions of totalitarian monocracy, established by Lenin and carried to their logical extreme by Stalin, made the Comintern a glittering citadel for outsiders and a death trap for those within its walls'.<sup>2</sup> A similar rendition has been put forward more recently by Richard Pipes in his book *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime*.<sup>3</sup> The message is clear, I think: the Comintern was a totalitarian organisation more or less from its birth, there was a direct line of continuity between the Leninist and Stalinist phases of its history, and the Terror of the late 1930s was the logical outcome of the Comintern's totalitarian essence.

This interpretation does indeed have a certain explanatory potency, but it seems to me that we need a more precise analytical framework if we are to approach an understanding of the Comintern in all its complexities. In a recent book on totalitarian theories, the British scholar Simon Tormey differentiated between proponents of 'strong' and 'weak' models of totalitarianism.<sup>4</sup> The advocates of the 'strong'

model, among whom Tormey includes Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski<sup>5</sup>, suggest that totalitarian regimes *were* able to control the minds and actions of their subjects and remould human life and behaviour in line with the dominant ideology. On the other hand, the theorists of 'weak' totalitarianism, such as Leszek Kolakowski<sup>6</sup> and Václav Havel,<sup>7</sup> challenge this assumption, arguing that, although totalitarian regimes may *attempt* to achieve complete control, they constantly fail to eradicate apathy, dissent and opposition. My aim in this chapter is to reflect on the applicability of the totalitarian thesis and to offer a few thoughts on the extent of the permeation of Stalinist practices in the Comintern by using Tormey's distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' models. I conclude that, despite the undeniable dictatorial nature of the Stalinist regime, the 'weak' model is more applicable to the Comintern, broadly defined, because it permits a more nuanced and sophisticated treatment of its internal dynamics and modes of operation.

The question arises: is any form of totalitarian model, be it 'strong' or 'weak', a useful tool to analyse the Comintern? After all, it could plausibly be argued that the international communist movement was so vast, so diverse, and subject to so many differing political cultures and contexts that any talk of monolithic uniformity is necessarily null and void. I am sympathetic to this position. But we can detect in the hyper-centralisation, the insistence on 'iron proletarian discipline', the stultifying ideological dogmatism, and above all the terroristic assault on loyal cadres an urge to total control and conformity which sharply distinguishes the Comintern from the social democratic Second International and 'Vienna Union'. Alternative terms such as 'authoritarian' or even 'dictatorial' do not quite convey the totalising thrust of the Bolshevik guardians of the Comintern. The model of 'weak' totalitarianism is sufficiently flexible to include these totalising features, while allowing room for a measure of disagreement, negotiation and even covert opposition within the Stalinised International.

Central to the claim that the Comintern was a totalitarian organisation is the issue of Russian control over its strategies, tactics, personnel and finances. As the Soviet regime became increasingly totalitarian, so the argument goes, this trend was replicated in the Comintern. Certainly, the International was the brainchild of Lenin and was dominated by the Bolsheviks. Russian hegemony was obvious from its

founding congress. But we must be careful to differentiate among three levels of control: first, the Soviet Politburo's control over the Comintern Executive in Moscow; second, the Executive's control over the national party leaderships; and third, the party leaderships' control over rank-and-file members. A good case can be made that, at all three levels, control was not 'total'.

I shall concentrate mainly on the first level, that is the relationship between the Soviet leadership and the Comintern's Executive Committee at the heart of power in Moscow, an arena where 'total' control should be most evident. Indeed, documents in the former Party archive confirm that the Politburo even in Lenin's time formulated Comintern policy and channelled its decisions through the Russian party delegation to the Executive Committee.<sup>8</sup> It is also clear that in the 1930s Stalin vetted the decisions of the plenary meetings of the Executive Committee and would intervene in Comintern affairs whenever he considered Soviet interests to be at stake. His word was gospel by the late 1920s and early 1930s, and no major policy or personnel decision could be taken without his sanction.<sup>9</sup> For instance, Stalin appears to have personally selected the Russian party delegates to the VII World Congress in 1935.<sup>10</sup> There is little doubt too that the terror in the Comintern, which engulfed thousands of cadres and foreign communists, was initiated by Stalin as an inseparable part of his onslaught on the Soviet party and state apparatuses.<sup>11</sup>

Judging from the protocols of Politburo meetings, from the *osobyie papki*, the 'special files' of top secret decisions taken by the Politburo, and from Stalin's personal letters to Molotov and Kaganovich,<sup>12</sup> Comintern affairs rarely troubled the inner sanctum of the Bolshevik party after 1928–29. The *osobyie papki* do show, however, that Stalin was determined to dissociate Soviet institutions and leaders from public involvement in Comintern activities,<sup>13</sup> that Moscow continued to invest large amounts of money in the Comintern central apparatus<sup>14</sup> and that, not surprisingly, the German situation was the main focus of concern. In December 1930 the Politburo established a special 'German Commission' composed of Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov and Piatnitskii to monitor events and frame the Comintern's response.<sup>15</sup> That response has almost universally been condemned by historians for facilitating Hitler's rise to power.

But all this does not mean that monolithic unity reigned in the upper

echelons of the Comintern. Disagreement and vehement debate characterised the early Comintern congresses and the Bolshevisation of the communist parties proceeded relatively slowly before 1928–29. Even as late as 1936 subtle differences of opinion were expressed in the Stalinised Presidium of the Executive Committee on such highly sensitive issues as the defence of the USSR against the threat of war. The Italian researcher, Silvio Pons, has argued persuasively that Dimitrov, and to a certain extent Togliatti, ‘tried to keep an autonomous role for the Comintern’ *vis-à-vis* Soviet foreign policy, Dimitrov remarking that Comintern positions should not necessarily ‘correspond to those of the diplomats, not even of Soviet diplomats’.<sup>16</sup> He also appears to have harboured private doubts about the wisdom of Stalin’s and Molotov’s anti-war and pro-German policy in the spring and summer of 1940. He reportedly intimated to Ernst Fischer that he, Dimitrov, supported a more belligerent response to fascist aggression by British and French workers.<sup>17</sup> And according to one Russian source, Comintern leaders actively lobbied Stalin to modify the anti-war line.<sup>18</sup>

It may be objected that a few private misgivings here and there are largely irrelevant because in the end the Dimitrovs and Togliattis always did what Stalin wanted. Yes: but I think the emphasis on limited debate in the Comintern leadership, cautious pressure on the ‘boss’ and stirrings from below in the communist parties themselves is not misplaced, because this more accurately portrays the processes by which Comintern strategies were formed and re-formed. Otherwise, we are left with the over-simplistic notion that only Stalin could initiate any change in Comintern policy as his cronies had no independent thoughts of their own. This is not the case. Dimitrov certainly held strong views about broadening the conception of the united front tactics in 1934 and in several private meetings seems to have persuaded Stalin of the need to abandon the ‘social fascist’ line.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, this whole question of the direction of influence in Comintern decision making is crucial. Did all influence come from the top down, from Stalin and the Politburo, or was there a measure of interaction? To what extent were Comintern leaders able to pressurise the Soviet leaders to change or adapt the line? Did the guardians of the masses of information, data and statistics that were collected by the Comintern apparatus have any effect on decision-making? After all, Stalin had to base his decisions on accurate information supplied by

subordinates. Even after the partial opening of the archives we are still not sure about this, but the most likely scenario is that draft proposals and resolutions were drawn up by Comintern staff and were then forwarded to Stalin, Molotov and others (Kaganovich and Zhdanov?), who would comment on the drafts in the margins and insist on alterations. Their instructions would then be communicated to the Comintern hierarchy by Manuil'skii and Piatnitskii, Stalin's main go-betweens.

But even if we accept that the Stalinist leaders increasingly determined the decision-making processes in Moscow, the Comintern's Executive was not always able to control decision *implementation* in the world-wide movement, particularly in the 1920s when discipline was less draconian. National traditions, values and democratic political cultures, which inevitably impinged on foreign communist parties, often coexisted uneasily with the conspiratorial and clandestine nature of the Bolshevised party.<sup>20</sup> A prime example is the attempt by the Comintern to reorganise communist parties on the basis of factory cells as part of the Bolshevisation process in the mid-to-late 1920s. This move was resisted by many foreign communists, largely because it smacked of illegality and clashed with older social democratic traditions of territorial organisation. Progress was thus very slow.<sup>21</sup>

And at the third level of control I mentioned, that of the party leadership's control over the rank and file, here again we are faced with intriguing issues. For instance, what impact did the mass influx of new, raw recruits into the French Communist Party (PCF) in the wake of the Popular Front policy have on internal party life? Many of these recruits were presumably untrained in the Stalinist version of 'iron proletarian discipline' and their militancy and spontaneity must have caused the party leaders, and their Moscow superiors, severe headaches. I am no expert on the French party, but it is worth asking whether Leninist 'democratic centralism', so beloved of the totalitarian theorists, can explain the maintenance of party unity. Is there any evidence that party leaders made concessions to rank-and-file sentiment? Or were loyal 'Bolshevised' cadres soon forged in the PCF by means of tight discipline and selected expulsions? This issue of the interrelationship between the party elite and the membership, and more broadly between the Moscow 'centre' and the 'periphery'<sup>22</sup>, is crucial because it challenges the classical totalitarian urge to create 'new Soviet persons', obedient to

authority and responsive to collective, rather than individualistic, goals. The insistent efforts of the Stalinised Comintern to mould the behaviour and attitudes of foreign communists do not appear to have been fully successful. Even those hand-picked cadres who studied at the Lenin School in Moscow in the 1920s and 1930s were not transmogrified into totally loyal subjects, and Soviet instructors at the School were unable to eradicate national traits, unruly behaviour and deviant attitudes.<sup>23</sup>

So, if I can sum up the main features of Stalinism in the Communist International: they include a strictly centralised form of decision making which ultimately rested on the cult of the 'infallible leader'; a dogmatic, stultified 'Marxism', but one which employed the rhetoric of mass democracy and legitimation; a repressive, and eventually arbitrary terroristic, regime that removed all real or imaginary opponents; and the primacy of *realpolitik* over ideology and of Soviet state interests over those of the international movement, nowhere better manifested than in the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939. Perhaps the best way of understanding the international communist movement in the 1930s is to recognise that Stalinism created a stiflingly bureaucratised Comintern apparatus and highly centralised communist parties committed primarily to the defence of the USSR. Nonetheless, it could not completely foreclose all space for national initiative and autonomous activity from below. Otherwise, the sectarian tactics of the 'Third Period' might have remained unchanged and the Popular Front policy might not have evolved in the course of 1934.

I turn finally to the causes of the 'totalitarian' degeneration of the Comintern. In the opinion of Lazitch, Drachkovitch and Pipes, the Stalinist terroristic dictatorship was inherent in a monolithic Leninist ideology and practice. The 'original sin' of Leninism held the seeds of Stalinism. I do not think this is an adequate explanation, regardless of the undoubted affinities between Leninism and Stalinism. It is true that Lenin's intolerance of opposition, his insistence on the highly centralised Bolshevik model of internal party organisation, his notion of 'iron discipline', and his utter contempt for reformist socialism were fully shared by his Georgian successor.

But to my mind the progressive Stalinisation of the International is better explained by a complex triple interaction of practical, ideological and personal factors: first, the Soviet leadership's constant search for national security in the face of perceived Western and Japanese

aggression; second, the Stalinists' predilection for the more authoritarian aspects of Bolshevik political culture; and finally, Stalin's quest for power, and the maintenance of that power, in the Russian party. Stalin's determination to ensure Soviet national security subordinated the Comintern's original mission of world revolution to the state interests of the USSR. This, together with his ruthless drive for power against successive 'oppositions', engendered resistance among many foreign communists, which in turn was countered by repressive measures – Stalin's 'surgical knife' that he referred to on more than one occasion.<sup>24</sup> But the job was only half done in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Covert opposition still existed and, as the international situation darkened, so Stalin sought once and for all to smash a potential fifth column in the ranks of the Soviet and foreign parties. Hence, the Great Terror of 1937–38. In the process, countless numbers of innocents got sucked into the maelstrom. At least, this is how Molotov explains the purges in his memoirs, and, although he is hardly the most objective source, I think he has a point.<sup>25</sup> The terror was intimately bound up with the threat of war and Stalin's profound sense of insecurity.

## Notes

1. See, for instance, E. Frankel Paul (ed.), *Totalitarianism at the Crossroads* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1990); J. Drabkin and N. Komolova (eds), *Totalitarizm v Evrope XX veka* (Moscow, 1996).
2. M.M. Drachkovitch and B. Lazitch, 'The Third International', in M.M. Drachkovitch (ed.), *The Revolutionary Internationals, 1864–1943* (Stanford, CA, 1966), p. 193.
3. Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919–1924* (London, 1995), pp. 172–239.
4. S. Tormey, *Making Sense of Tyranny: Interpretations of Totalitarianism* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 170–89.
5. Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA, 1956).
6. Leszek Kolakowski, 'Totalitarianism and the Virtue of the Lie', in I. Howe (ed.), *1984 Revisited: Totalitarianism in Our Century* (New York, 1983), pp. 122–35.
7. Václav Havel, 'The Power of the Powerless', in Václav Havel et al., *The Power of the Powerless*, edited by J. Keane (London, 1985), pp. 23–96; Václav Havel, *Open Letters* (London, 1992), pp. 268–71, 349–50, 358.
8. See F.I. Firsov, 'K voprosu o taktike edinogo fronta v 1921–1924 gg.', *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1987, No. 10, pp. 114–15; A.Iu. Vatlin, *Komintern: Pervye desiat' let* (Moscow, 1993), pp. 119–41.

9. See, in particular, F.I. Firsov, 'Stalin i Komintern', part 2, *Voprosy istorii*, 1989, No. 9, pp. 7-12.
10. Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History (RTsKhIDNI), fond 17, opis' 120, delo 203, list 1-6. It is interesting that M. Trilisser (Moskvin) is not among those listed.
11. P. Huber, 'The Cadre Department, the OMS and the "Dimitrov" and "Manuil'sky" Secretariats during the Phase of the Terror', in M. Narinsky and J. Rojahn (eds), *Centre and Periphery: The History of the Comintern in the Light of New Documents* (Amsterdam, 1996), p. 144. For the scope of the terror in the Comintern's central organs, see F.I. Firsov, 'Chistka apparata Kominterna' (unpublished manuscript); and M. Panteleiev, 'La terreur stalinienne au Komintern en 1937-1938: les chiffres et les causes', *Communisme*, Nos 40-41 (1995), pp. 37-52.
12. Between 1932 and 1935 Stalin only once commented on the Comintern in his private correspondence with Kaganovich: RTsKhIDNI, f. 81, op. 3, del. 99, l. 63. A similar picture emerges from Stalin's (incomplete) published correspondence with Molotov: see Lars T. Lih, O. Naumov and O. Khlevniuk (eds), *Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925-36* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1995).
13. See the Politburo resolution 'On the Comintern and Soviet Power', adopted on Stalin's report on 26 April 1928, in RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 162, del. 6, l. 70. The resolution stated that Rykov's speech to the VI Comintern congress on the situation in the USSR should be delivered by Varga or someone else who was not a member of the Soviet government. It also insisted that monies should be delivered to Comintern sections by 'foreign comrades' in Berlin (Western Bureau) and Irkutsk (Eastern Bureau), not via Moscow and Russian officials. Stalin was evidently concerned 'not to give our enemies any cause to assert the interlinking of Soviet power with the Comintern'.
14. For instance, the Politburo meeting of 10 January 1929 confirmed the budget for the Comintern in 1928-29 as follows: 332,500 roubles (golden?) for the clandestine Department of International Communication (OMS), 888,000 roubles for the ECCI apparatus, and 57,000 roubles to cover the over-expenditure on the VI World Congress; this made a grand total of 1,277,500 roubles: RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 7, l. 27. The total for 1930, confirmed by the Politburo at its session on 15 February, amounted to 1,265,494 roubles: RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 8, l. 80.
15. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 9, l. 111.
16. S. Pons, 'The Comintern and the Issue of War in the 1930s: the Debate in March-April 1936', in Narinsky and Rojahn (eds), *Centre and Periphery*, pp. 118-19.
17. E. Fischer, *An Opposing Man* (London, 1974), pp. 354-5.
18. 'Komintern i sovetsko-germanskii dogovor o nenapadenii', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, No. 12, p. 214.
19. K. Denchev and M.T. Meshcheriakov, 'Dnevnikovye zapisi G. Dimitrova', *Novaiia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1991, No. 4, pp. 68-72; B.M. Leibzon and K.K. Shiriniia, *Povorot v politike Kominterna* (Moscow, 1975).
20. This appears to be the case even in the German Communist Party where the 'left-wing' was strong: see the recent monograph by Klaus-Michael Mallmann, *Kommunisten in der Weimarer Republik. Sozialgeschichte einer revolutionären Bewegung* (Darmstadt, 1996), reviewed by David Crew in *Journal of Social*



*History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1997), pp. 449–52.

21. K. McDermott and J. Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 65–7.
22. For an assessment of recent work on the ‘centre-periphery’ issue, see B. Studer and B. Unfried, ‘At the Beginning of a History: Visions of the Comintern after the Opening of the Archives’, *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (1997), pp. 419–46.
23. On the Lenin School, see B. McLoughlin, “‘The Party Before Anything Else’: Rituals of “Criticism and Self-criticism” in the British and Austrian Sectors of the International Lenin School, Moscow, 1929–1937’ (unpublished manuscript).
24. In 1926, for example, Stalin talked of the need ‘to take the surgical knife in hand and chop off certain comrades’: cited in F.I. Firsov, ‘Stalin i Komintern’, part 1, *Voprosy istorii*, 1989, No. 8, p. 10.
25. A. Resis (ed.), *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics* (Chicago, 1993), p. 254.

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